YEAR ONE OF THE REPUBLIC.

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YEAR ONE OF THE REPUBLIC.

—1793.—

THE STORY OF A PEASANT.

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THE STORY OF A PEASANT.

BY

MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN,

AUTHORS OF "MADAME THÉRÈSE," "THE CONSCRIPT," "WATERLOO," "THE ALSACIAN SCHOOLMASTER," &c., &c.

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YEAR ONE OF THE REPUBLIC.

1793.

CHAPTER I.

WE are now far from home; I shall have no longer occasion to talk to you about the little forge at the Bois-des-Chênes, nor the inn of the Three Pigeons, or of old Father Bastien's cottage; for now our marches and countermarches, skirmishes, attacks, and battles, are about to begin.

The national volunteers belonging to the Sarrebourg district remained in cantonments at Rulzheim up to the end of July; there those who came from the mountains armed with scythes and clubs were supplied with muskets, ammunition, and cartridge-boxes. They came in every day in troops; they were drilled there; and in that corner of Alsace between Wissembourg and Landau you could hear nothing but the drums of the infantry who were learning to keep step, and the

trumpets of the cavalry who were made to gallop in a circle.

Behind us lay stretched a long line of redoubts between Kellermann's camp and that of Biron; it might have been between four and five leagues long, and followed the course of the Lauter; they were afterwards called "the lines of Wissembourg."

In those days there was no commissariat train, as they were obliged to force the services of the peasants, their carts, and their horses; consequently, very often supplies fell short.

I was quartered with Mark Divès and Jean Rat on an old widow, who cried from morning till night. The poor woman had only vegetables, potatoes, and rye bread to give us. Divès and I were always satisfied, but Jean Rat thought it was not enough—he wanted meat.

Our comrades, who were quartered near us, took what they could find; they slept on hay in the barns belonging to the neighbouring farms, or under cart-sheds. They could not be allowed to die of hunger; for the poor inhabitants it was a terrible visitation.

Everything was paid for by assignats, which were of no great value. Our cantonments swarmed with little German gazettes, in which the misery of the army of shoemakers, the ignorance and follies of its leaders, were ridiculed—the émigrés described us as a pack of shivering beggars on the point of running away, the Germans in pursuit of us with ferocious faces, curled-up moustaches, and brandished sabres. Poor devils! they had some hard blows for twenty years, in spite of their long moustaches. This is how the scribblers of royalty set one people against another, merely to live

in luxury at their expense, while they are slaughtering each other. They could talk of nothing but our misery and the splendour of the allied armies, of their fine appearance, of their numerous artillery, how well their magazines were supplied, extended along the Rhine, on the territory of the Elector of Bavaria, the Duke of Deux-Ponts, and other princes of the Empire. You may easily think how anxious it made us to go and see these magazines at Spires, Worms, and Mayence; we were always thinking about it, and our enthusiasm increased accordingly.

Unfortunately, our troops only consisted at that time of twenty-one thousand infantry belonging to the army of the Rhine, seventeen thousand national volunteers, six thousand cavalry, and seventeen hundred artillerymen, altogether forty-six thousand men, twenty-four thousand of whom were employed to man the redoubts, leaving twenty-two thousand to keep the field.

The Prussians and Austrians altogether amounted to more than two hundred thousand men. Our émigrés used to say to them, "Advance, advance," for Bouillé knew very well that when the ministers of Louis XVI. said in the National Assembly that our field equipment was efficient; that the indiscreet zeal of those who supplied arms to the national volunteers was the only cause that the regular delivery of muskets was impeded; that the state of the arsenals was perfect—in fact, that our armies were actually revelling in abundance—he knew well that these ministers lied; that we had neither officers of rank, nor engineers, nor miners, in consequence of desertions; that we were obliged to requisition carriages, saddle-horses, and draught-horses, and even intrenching tools; that most of us had but a

jacket, linen pantaloons, and sabots, with old pieces which missed fire six times out of ten; that we had been told to supply ourselves how we could with a skin bag to put our scanty effects in, and a linen bag for our rations; he knew all this well, for the ministers, Louis XVI., the court, and the émigrés, were all then acting in concert.

Custine, who commanded us under General Biron's orders, had just entered Landau, our first fortress beyond Thionville and Metz; he entered the town on horseback through a breach in the wall; his hussars rode in after him. You may judge from that the state of our defences; how often have I exclaimed—

"Ah, you miserable villains, see in what a position you have left us! If the enemy marches against us in force, what can we do against two hundred thousand men? We must be crushed, we must all die! You will have sold your country, but you will retain your own privileges and keep us slaves. You are the traitors, and your minister Narbonne, who, on his return from inspecting our fortresses, told the Assembly that we were ready for war, is the greatest scoundrel living."

Fortunately for us the Prussians and Austrians did not move forward; they had great generals, men of prudence and sagacity, princes, kings, men of natural genius, who planned operations beforehand, and divided our country among them. If these men had a son of the people, such as Hoche or Kléber, to command them, we should have been lost. At last they remained thinking it over for three weeks, totally inactive, when suddenly our battalion, which was called the 1st Mountain Battalion, received orders to elect its officers and then to march to Landau.

That very day, the last day of July, 1792, the companies formed according to their villages, chose their sergeants, lieutenants, second lieutenants, and captains; then all the companies united elected Jean-Baptiste Meunier as commandant. He was a young architect whom I had seen many times at home with his level and measuring cord on the glacis when he was levelling the covered ways; he used to be employed by Pirmetz, a contractor for fortifications; he took the command of us. Jean Rat became drum-major at once; the rogue dropped into a good position at last; with his double pay he would be able to live as well as a sergeant.

The next day we set out for Landau, some of us in blouses, others in jackets, with cross-belts on, and muskets on our shoulders. It was fine weather. The second battalion of volunteers from Charente-Inférieure, quartered near us, followed the same route. Many were barefooted, and we used to sing the Marseillaise together, which all patriots along the Rhine began to know well.

The Charente-Inférieure battalion halted at Impflingen, and we reached Landau at three in the afternoon. The post at the advanced guard was held by the Bretagne regiments, still wearing their white coats, and when the sentinel cried, "Who goes there?" the commandant Meunier answered, "First Mountain Battalion," among cries of "Vive la nation;" every man put his cap on the point of his bayonet; we were all mountaineers, and proud of the name.

Order was given to admit us, the battalion marched in through the dark old gates, with the three fleurs-de-lis overhead, singing, "Allons, enfans de la patrie!" It was like the rolling of thunder.

Landau is very like Phalsbourg, but it is an old German town with drawbridges, gates, ramparts, and half-moons, after the French fashion. The Queich flows round the ramparts; it is but a marsh full of reeds, willows, and high grass where the frogs and toads croak all day and all night.

The greater part of the ramparts were falling into the ditches, and the garrison was hard at work with pick-axes, spades, ladders, and wheelbarrows, repairing them.

It was a credit to Louis XVI. to have such places fortified by Vauban, and in such good preservation! The money of the country was spent in fêtes, hunts, and pensions in the red book. Good heavens, what shame and what disgrace!

The garrison had just been raised to seven thousand six hundred men.

As soon as we got into barracks we were at once set to work with the others. Our commandant, Meunier, measure in hand, was at home at this employment; he never quitted the ramparts, and it was our battalion which rebuilt the bastion on the Albertsweiler side. Every man worked at his trade. Masons built up walls, excavators worked on the glacis, &c.; five or six blacksmiths, volunteers like myself, under my orders, mended broken tools, and we had plenty to do.

But what I shall never forget is the rage and indignation of the garrison when the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto to the inhabitants of France reached us. Instead of suppressing it, it was read out by order at roll-call in the morning.

It was a sort of proclamation, in which this Prussian field-marshal gave us notice that the Sovereigns were

coming to re-establish the German princes in their rights and possessions in Alsace and Lorraine: that they would take nothing from us, but merely furnish his most Christian Majesty our King with the assistance necessary to insure the happiness of his subjects; that the combined armies would protect those boroughs, towns, and villages which should hasten to throw open their gates to the Prussians and Austrians; but that the inhabitants of those localities which should dare to defend themselves against the troops of their majesties, or should fire upon them, either in the open country or from the doors, windows, or other apertures in their houses, would be subject to military execution, according to the laws of war; that the French troops of the line were summoned to submit and return to their former loyalty; that the National Guard was also charged provisionally to watch over the country districts until the arrival of the allies, who would relieve them of that duty; that all Parisians, without distinction of rank, were equally expected to submit themselves "without delay" to the Austrians and the Prussians, and that if they insulted Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, or their august family, the allies would utterly destroy their city; but if they obeyed at once the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria promised to entreat His Majesty to pardon the crimes they had already committed.

This manifesto had hardly been read when all the companies, cavalry, infantry of the line, and volunteers, hurried from their barracks and cried together, "To the enemy!" The town National Guards, too, issued from their houses, and the cries of "To the enemy!" "Conquer or die!" "Vive la nation!" and the singing of the

"Marseillaise" and the "Ca Ira" became so loud that General Custine galloped down the Rue des Postes surrounded by his staff, thinking the men had mutinied. I can still see him, a tall, powerful, red-haired man, with bright shining eyes and large red nose, and whiskers and moustache à la hussard, raise his hand. I can see, too, the colonel of the 2nd Chasseurs à Cheval, Joseph de Broglie, a magnificent officer, with the confident air of the old nobility; the captain of cavalry, Houchard de Forbach, with a face marked by the small-pox and with the scar of a sabre-cut across it—I see them all, their horses plunging and rearing, crying out, giving orders, but no one could hear a word.

Of course I was as angry as the rest of them; I felt the insult which a poor Prussian duke had dared to offer the nation to the tips of my fingers. I shuddered. Suddenly they began to beat the générale on the ramparts. For the last week the enemy's advanced guards had been drawing nearer the fortress; we thought we were attacked; we all ran to our posts on the bastions, and then we saw the country round in a peaceful state of tranquillity.

The general had given the order; it was only a ruse de guerre, in order to separate us and bring us back to our duty.

Every one set to work again, but from that moment the indignation against Louis XVI., the Duke of Brunswick, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Austria increased daily. Soldiers, volunteers, and National Guards met together in the breweries and public-houses; they drew up petitions to the National Assembly against traitors, and they demanded the deposition of Louis XVI.

So things went on for some time. Ramparts had been restored, outworks had been palisaded, guns had been put in position, fascines had been planted.

Strong detachments of Austrians had begun to spread themselves along our lines between Wissembourg and Landau; convoys of flour and stores were coming in under the charge of the commissariat officers of the district to provision the place; the 2nd Chasseurs à Cheval and National Dragoons escorted them, for the enemy came as far as the advanced guards at Impflingen and Offenbach to cut them off; we expected daily to be blockaded.

But before the Austrians' arrival we were destined to hear the effect which Brunswick's terrible manifesto had produced in Paris—the taking of the Tuileries by the people, the massacre of the Swiss Guard, the imprisonment of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette and their family, first in the Luxembourg and afterwards in the Temple.

When the courier arrived, the 15th of August, the enthusiasm of the troops was so great that the enemy's patrols might have heard us crying and singing at the distance of half a league round the town; every one embraced his neighbour and cried—

"We have got rid of the traitors at last." Tears of emotion were in their eyes; they laughed, and were as pleased as if they had gained a fortune.

This is how it happened. I did not see it myself, but we received patriot gazettes by hundreds; they were read everywhere. The first comer got upon a table and began to read aloud a letter he had just got from a cousin or a friend; others read the last bulletin

of the National Assembly or the Jacobins' Club, so everything was known.

I have already told you how since the 20th of June they distrusted the king, who would not withdraw his veto against the National Assembly respecting refractory priests. Since then his ministers had done nothing to protect us from invasion; they had left us with empty magazines, defenceless fortresses; they had delayed forwarding the commissions of newly-elected officers, and insisted with the greatest effrontery in the Assembly that everything was prepared, up to the very moment that the Austrians and Prussians began their march. Then these ministers sent in their resignations all together, and the Assembly had been compelled to declare the country in danger.

You know this already.

Well, notwithstanding all this, many quiet people could not yet credit that so good a king could be guilty of such treachery, when the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto declared "that the Prussians and Austrians were invading us for the purpose of re-establishing Louis XVI., his nobility, and his bishops in their ancient privileges and us in our ancient slavery." This shameful, abominable, and insolent manifesto, I say, showed how all the race leagued itself against the people, as thick as thieves, and naturally even the most respectable persons became indignant at it. Hundreds of petitions were sent in to the National Assembly, calling for the king's deposition; but the best of the deputies were then present in the departments, encouraging volunteers to enrol themselves; those who were present in the Assembly were reluctant to listen to the people's lawful complaints; and at that very moment, as we

discovered later, the chiefs of the Girondins had an understanding with the king, who had promised to make them his ministers.

The Paris sections then, seeing that our deputies were doing nothing towards the salvation of the country, declared "that they would wait with patience until eleven in the evening of Thursday, the ninth of August, for the Assembly to pronounce the king's forfeiture, but that if justice was not rendered to the people by the legislative body, that same day, at midnight, the tocsin would be rung, the générale beaten, and all Paris would rise at once!" That was open and brave.

In answer to this, the Assembly ordered the Minister of War to send immediately to the camp at Soissons all the federals from the departments who might be in Paris; and the same day, by 406 votes against 224, the proposal to accuse General Lafayette was rejected.

Forthwith Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Barbaroux, Panis, the chief of the Marseilles federals, Sergent, Bazire, Merlin de Thionville, Santerre, Westermann, &c., all patriots capable of saving our liberties or of dying in their defence, urged the people to insurrection. The sections, in a sitting of the night of the 9th of August, named each three commissioners, "with full powers to protect the public weal," and Danton ordered the tocsin to be rung.

The château of the Tuileries was full of Swiss guards, of gentlemen, and other guards ready to defend it. But Louis XVI., who foresaw, if the people carried the day, they would avenge the deaths of their friends on himself, instead of waiting till he was attacked, avoided the threatened danger by betaking himself with the queen and the dauphin to the National Assembly,

saying he was desirous of sparing the insurgents a great crime.

It seems this king was not of the same way of thinking as the lowest village chapman would have been, that it is a disgrace to leave the defence of his property to others, and to sacrifice their lives while he put his own out of danger.

After their majesties' departure, the people arrived under the command of Westermann, fired upon by the Swiss from all the windows. At first the patriots fell back, but afterwards they charged with the bayonet; they set the Swiss barracks on fire and then rushed into the buildings, massacring servants, valets, gentlemen, every one they met. The unfortunate Swiss were thrown from the windows, shot in the courtyards, in the streets, in the gardens. Two hundred Marseilles federals, one hundred Breton federals, five hundred Swiss, one thousand National Guards and citizens belonging to the faubourgs, a thousand of the nobility and their domestics covered the pavement, the staircases, and the floors of the château with their bodies, or were consumed in the ruins of the burning barracks, while His Majesty Louis XVI., instead of supporting his defenders, remained safe in his hiding-place in the National Assembly. The gazettes of the day said that he dined there with a good appetite; but that is incredible, for it would be too disgusting for a valiant nation like the French to be ruled by such masters.

During the massacre the patriots continued arriving at the Assembly, calling for the king's deposition, but our deputies wanted to know whether the Swiss or the people had the best of it before they gave any answer. It was the safest thing to do.

At last, about two in the afternoon, the people, having destroyed everything in the château, marched upon the Assembly, which then thought fit to obey the orders of the new Commune, and the Girondin Vergniaud, who was president, announced the provisional suspension of Louis XVI., and the summons of a National Convention. It then issued a decree inviting every Frenchman to meet in the primary assemblies on the 26th of August to choose electors, and the latter as soon as chosen to proceed on the 2nd of September to the election of deputies, who ought to arrive in Paris the 20th of that month.

It was no longer a question of intrigues either active or the reverse; I saw that Chauvel, the president of our club, well known to every one in the neighbourhood of Phalsbourg, would probably be chosen representative of the people at the Convention, which pleased me much. But there are forty days between the 10th of August and the 20th of September, and during those forty days, surrounded as we were by enemies on all sides, from Antwerp to Nice in Italy, the revolutionary Commune in Paris, composed of commissioners named by the sections during the night of the 10th of August, was in effect in absolute power; every one felt there was a terrible moment at hand. Happily Chauvel and Marguerite, in their letters during their stay in Paris, had often mentioned Robespiere, Bazire, Meslin, Sergent, and Santerre as influential patriots, and when I again read their names in the gazettes among many others who composed the new Commune, I said to myself these men are sure not to allow either the country or liberty to perish; rather than that they would destroy every one, and that then we ourselves should be no longer in this world.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the affair of the 10th of August we learned that the Legislative Assembly, urged on by the new Commune, had decreed the abolition of religious costume, had instituted the right of divorce, ordered the reorganisation of the National Guard, to which all citizens were to belong; the sale in small lots of estates belonging to the Church and the emigrant families, to be paid for in a term of years, in order to facilitate the buying of such property by persons of small means without compelling them to pay the price summarily; and lastly, the obliging all ecclesiastics who refused the oath to the constitution to leave the country within fifteen days, with the alternative of transportation to Guyana. A decree was also passed that the fathers and mothers of emigrants should be held as hostages till the conclusion of the war, and that those who had fired upon the people should be prosecuted in a criminal court.

These laws gave naturally great pleasure to the

patriots; in their opinion the revolution was progressing, and knaves had had their day.

But about the same time there was a report that Lafayette, the commander-in-chief of the army of the Ardennes, had refused to acknowledge the revolution of the 10th of August, that the enemy had begun their invasion in the north, and that La Vendée, a prey to noble and priestly intrigue, was only waiting for the entry of the Prussians into Champagne to rise in revolt. All this bad news caused great uneasiness in the country.

Autumn was approaching; fogs rising from the Rhine covered the Palatinate, and the marshes of the Queich steamed like a vat. Every day reconnoitring parties were sent out, generally cavalry. At market the country people used to tell how they had seen masses of Prussians and Austrians marching towards Thionville, and how a very strong column had made a detour round the town to get into Lorraine. We also learned that commissioners from the National Assembly had inspected the lines at Wissembourg, and that one of them, Citizen Carnot, was causing new redoubts to be constructed.

The posts were then doubled; ammunition was served out for the guns on the ramparts, and the sentries in their boxes at the corner of every half-moon watched the country constantly as well as they could through the fog. Occasionally patrols belonging to the enemy, pandours and lancers, would scour across the plain and fire a few shots, as if to tell us, Here we are! we shall soon be among you!

About this time I was on duty one morning at the Albertsweiler gate; our last sorties had brought in the

cattle from the neighbourhood, the drawbridges were up, and the gates closed. Our men were in the guard-room. Two days before, the volunteers' long blue coats with red facings, sans-culottes overalls, and cocked hats had been served out to us. Whenever we went on guard we also wore a great grey woollen cloak, but which could not prevent the cold fog from chilling the marrow in our bones; our comrades, sitting huddled up round the stove, smoked their pipes and meditated in silence; while the more lively walked up and down and stamped their feet in the space between the two bridges, and whistled to drive away care. Such was garrison life then, the most wearying of all; but it was not fated to last much longer for us, and I am even now glad of it, for five or six years of such an existence would convert a clever man into an absolute fool.

It might have been about nine in the morning, and we were to be relieved at twelve, when the cannon in the direction of Impflingen began to fire, only a discharge at intervals; but the little glass windows in the guard-room shook again. The guard turned out in a hurry; we listened, thinking it might be some attack by surprise; but my comrade in barracks, a grey-headed volunteer as dry and thin as a herring, told us that cannon-shots without musketry meant nothing serious, but that they were only fired to salute either some French marshal or prince of the blood royal. The old fellow, whose name was Jean-Baptiste Sôme, made no mistake, only marshals and princes of the blood had disappeared for a time; the messenger from head-quarters told us the commissioners from the National Assembly were making their entry by the Wissembourg

gate, and that General Custine had ordered a salute to be fired.

We consequently turned in again, and about twelve, having been relieved, we walked off into the town, curious to see the commissioners, of whom each of us had formed his own idea. By this time they were at the mairie, and all the staff of the fortress were going to present themselves in full uniform.

When we got to our barracks we found from despatches that the bad news was quite true. Lafayette wanted to march upon Paris, exterminate the Jacobins, and reinstate the king; but the National Assembly, at the instigation of the Mountain, had declared him a traitor to his country; he had just escaped into the Low Countries.

Dumouriez replaced him in his command of the Army of the North; Kellermann was about to command the Army of the Centre, at Metz; and Luckner that of the reserve, at Châlons. We now knew that we were being invaded on all sides; the enemy had shot the patrols at Sierck and was bombarding Longwy; Vendée was in insurrection—in fact, everything was going on as might be expected—invasion, treason, and civil war.

Only imagine what ideas came into our heads when we heard this disastrous intelligence. The plot of Bouillé, the Count d'Artois, and the bishops, was now discovered.

We must conquer or die.

It was, therefore, with no small satisfaction that we heard the commissioners from the National Assembly —who were but plain citizens, owing their position to ourselves—had just broken, like lucifer-matches, MM. Joseph Broglie, colonel of the 2nd regiment of mounted

chasseurs, and Villantroy, lieutenant-colonel, because they refused to take the new oath required from all officers of high rank, and had promoted in their place the commandants Houchard and Coustard, who were known in the regiment to be true patriots and brave soldiers. Such a thing had never been seen before, and it compelled respect for the nation. By only looking at the faces of the captains and lieutenants you could see how this had altered their opinion of the people's strength, and that they were ready to take the oath with enthusiasm.

I need hardly describe the satisfaction of the non-commissioned officers and privates. They were pleased, of course. When at two o'clock the rappel was beaten for the commissioners' review, you should have seen with what order and precision they marched past, and heard how they shouted, "Vive la nation! Vivent les commissaires! Vivent la Commune de Paris, and l'Assemblée Nationale!"

I can see still the great square of sabres and bayonets all round the Place d'Armes; company succeeding company; squadrons following squadrons, field-pieces in the intervals; in the middle of the square the three commissioners, Carnot and Prieur in their Engineer officers' uniform, Ritter wearing his sabre in a black belt under his arm, a tricolour scarf as a sash round his waist, a great round hat with wide brim and three feathers—red, white, and blue—in it; such were the elect of the people, received by generals and colonels with so much ceremony.

To all this they paid very little attention; they chiefly inquired after the wants of the soldiers; they listened to every complaint, and made a note of it.

The finest part of this review, which gave me the grandest idea of the sovereign people, was when the representatives, in a loud voice, as they passed along the battalions, cried out—

"You swear to maintain freedom and equality, or die in their defence?"

To which, with shouldered arms and our right hand in the air, we all answered, "I swear it!" Some of us were very pale, some had tears in their eyes.

We well understood then what we were to do; we knew it was our own happiness from first to last, and that of our parents and families, as well as our country's honour.

But I must now tell you something which especially concerns me, and which will give you a still better idea of how fraternity was understood by the people's representatives.

About eight in the evening the review was over; we had marched past to the cry of "Liberty for ever! down with aristocrats and courtly officers! down with intriguers! justice for ever!" The whole town echoed with singing and shouting. We in our barracks, after our supper, joked about the "yellow cartridges" which the aristocrat officers had just had given them—every one in his turn. While we were talking the sergeant of the guard came in and said the commissioners from the National Assembly wished to see Michel Bastien. Of course I thought it was a joke, and so did my comrades; we all began to laugh; but on the sergeant saying he was quite serious, and that a hussar was waiting for me at the door, I took down my hat and put my belt on.

I still thought there must be some mistake, and that they wanted some other Bastien—there was no scarcity

of that name in my country. But at the bottom of the stairs the orderly, who was on horseback, showed me by the light of the lantern the written order, and I read as follows:—"Michel Bastien, volunteer in the first mountain battalion." I therefore began walking by the hussar's side; he was an old fellow with a long grey pigtail, and looking rather suspicious; he looked down askance on me as he rode on his horse, believing, no doubt, I had got into some scrape, and that I might perhaps try to run away.

I had not recovered from my surprise, and when we reached the courtyard of the Grand Hôtel des Postes, the windows lighted up from top to bottom and the court itself crowded with hussars, I really knew not what to think.

The officer on duty read the order, and sent me upstairs to the first floor, into a long corridor where the hotel waiters were going and coming with dishes and wine in baskets. Our General Custine, the greatest bon-vivant in our army, was entertaining the commissioners and the staff of the fortress; he was an old nobleman, and knew all about it.

One of the servants, surprised to see me standing there, asked me what I wanted. I told him the commissioners had sent for me, and he directly opened the door of a large room on the left of the corridor and told me to go in.

I walked into the room, where there was a lighted lamp on a round table. On the right, in the next room, I could hear them talking and laughing, and the jingling of plates and glasses. I had been there but about a minute, very much surprised to see no one, when the door opened and Citizen Carnot walked in,

with his scarf round his waist, and asked me, like the kind-hearted man he really was—

"Are you Michel Bastien, Chauvel's future son-in-law?"

"Yes, commandant," I replied, disconcerted.

"Do not be surprised," continued he, holding out his hand. "Chauvel and I are friends; many a time have I dined with him in his little lodging in the Rue du Bouloi. Your future wife is a good patriot—here is something she has commissioned me to give you."

He took a letter out of his pocket and gave it to me. I was so happy that I did not know how to thank him. He looked closely at me.

"Are you only a simple volunteer?" said he, after a moment's pause. "Chauvel assured me you are well educated; how is it you have not been named sergeant or officer?"

I became very red, and replied—

"I could if I had wished. Those from my village would have made me sergeant, but old soldiers ought to have the preference; they know what war is, and will lead us better under fire—that is my opinion, commandant."

"Ah!" said he, "then you have refused promotion?"

"Yes; I have no intention of remaining a soldier—it is not my business. I set off from home to defend our liberty; when once liberty is safe I shall go quietly home again, take up my trade as a blacksmith, and try and become a good father of a family; I wish for nothing else."

He smiled as he listened to me, and said—

"Very well. Chauvel has a good opinion of you, and I see he is right. We shall pass Phalsbourg as

we return, and I will tell him about our meeting. I see you are impatient to read your intended's letter—farewell."

He shook hands with me, and I went away in a state of enthusiasm, saying to myself—

"If ever I should be so fortunate as to have the power of being useful to Carnot—if, for instance, he should ever be a prisoner—I would cut through anything to set him free! I should not mind being cut to pieces for him!"

While making similar extravagant reflections, such as only occur to youthful heads, I hurried up our barrack stairs and entered the dormitory where our men were sleeping two and two. Notwithstanding it was against orders to light a candle after the retreat had been sounded, I struck a light and began reading Margaret's letter in the chimney; nothing could be seen from the outside, and the corporal was as fast asleep as the rest.

Many, many years have elapsed since I received that letter at the end of August, 1792; I was young then, and am now grown old; I was then full of strength and love. I cried with grief as Margaret wrote how pained she was that we were separated from one another. To-day, in spite of my affection for the good and kind old woman, all that seems but a dream. Well, now, I could even now repeat that letter word for word. How often have I read it and read it again at the bivouac, at Mayence, everywhere, in fact! At last it became so worn in the folds that it fell to pieces. I still read it all the same; every time I fancied I met with something fresh which always affected me.

But love expressions are only for ourselves; old or

young, we keep them as our best blessing; all I can tell you now is that Margaret often mentioned my father to me—he came to dine with them every Sunday; and my brother Stephen, who was now going into the book-selling business; for the primary meetings had already begun; it was known beforehand that Chauvel would be elected to the Convention—every one wished it; he had already been named first as eligible by a large majority of votes, so that was certain! This time Margaret was not to follow him to Paris; she was to look after the business, distribute good books about our country: their business was too good to lose. Little Stephen was to remain with her; she was very fond of him, and he was a good boy, who was not deficient in sense, and only asked to be taught.

Besides all this, Margaret gave me an account of the commissioners' reception at Phalsbourg; they had reviewed the troops, and then they paid a visit to the Club of the Friends of Liberty and Freedom. The whole town was enthusiastic about the affairs of the 10th of August; the municipal authorities had just sent twelve hundred francs towards the expenses of the war, and afterwards one thousand and sixty-two livres to the National Assembly for the same purpose. The commissioners had publicly thanked Chauvel for the good direction he had given, not only to the club, but to the whole country round.

So far Margaret. At the end of the letter Chauvel himself encouraged me in doing my duty to the best of my ability, telling me war would only last six months, for we should soon strike home to them and drive them back. He had forgotten what he once said at the club, that the war would be a long one, and he wrote in that

manner to keep up my spirits; but it was not needed; I knew very well that a war once begun has no reason for ceasing but the extermination of one or the other.

Next day the commissioners left us under a good escort and went to Belfort, in Alsace.

The country round was swarming with the enemy's patrols, a sort of banditti in red cloaks who plundered villages and robbed individuals. Sometimes these vagabonds came up to the glacis; they wore a sheepskin cap over their eyes, they had turned-up noses and long dirty moustaches; they would fire off their pistols at the ramparts and be off again yelling; they were a sort of savage peasantry from the farthest part of Austria, and were called pandours, creatures remarkable for filth and vermin, and their little horses with their long manes and tails were as wild as themselves.

These people mounted guard over us; they were posted all round the town just out of cannon-shot. From hour to hour we heard a musket fired from the rampart, and then all was still. This is what is called a blockade.

The enemy kept marching by in the distance. Cavalry, infantry, convoys of powder and ball, all glided by in the fog towards Lorraine. When we saw those innumerable troops what ideas had we about an invasion, and how we longed to find ourselves there among those great battles!

The weather continued dull and overcast; it often rained; our only consolation was the reflection that the Prussians and Austrians were exposed to it night and day. Two or three times the Germans had sent us a flag of truce, an officer and a trumpeter. They were met, their officer's eyes were bandaged, and he was

brought before the authorities; what could these men have to say? No one knew except the council of war.

One September day a report was raised that a pandour had hailed the outposts at Albertsweiler and told them that Longwy was taken, and that Verdun had surrendered.

The whole garrison talked of nothing else. Custine, with an escort of hussars, left the fortress to rejoin the lines of Wissembourg; the escort soon returned; the hussars told us that the 8th and 10th Chasseurs, the 1st Dragoons, the 4th and 19th Cavalry, the 1st and 2nd Grenadiers, one battalion from the Saone and Loire, and several from the Lower Rhine, had set off by forced marches to Metz; that was perhaps the most oppressive sensation about the heart we had yet felt; we all thought we had lost some great battle, since they were obliged to weaken the lines to send out supports.

Nevertheless the patriotic burghers insisted that Alsace had nothing to fear, for there were always troops enough to guard the passage by Lauterbourg; the Germans could only get through by the Fischbach and Dahn valleys, or through the Bienwald woods, where the national volunteers could exterminate them at their leisure, and if they went by the Altstadt road our redoubts would stop them were they fifty thousand strong.

This was the sort of conversation held in the Landau breweries; burghers and soldiers agreed like brothers. But supposing the allies should open up a road to Paris, what should we be the better for preserving our own little corner of Alsace? How uneasy we were during these fifteen days, and how anxious!

Old Sôme was the only one in our room who did not lose his courage; on one occasion he said to some of the most alarmed—

"Let them come, the more the better; we shall fall upon their rear, not one shall escape."

We kept up our spirits nevertheless; all we asked was to go out and fight, when one morning the long line of enemies who had been marching past for three weeks came to an end; one hundred and eighty thousand of the enemy were in France. It was useless looking from the loftiest part of the city, there were none to be seen; even the pandours had followed in the rear of the last column. On that day a number of country people, with their baskets on their heads or their shoulders, came up to the advanced posts of the town; an order was sent to let them in by a posterngate, and these people told us that Prince Hohenlohe-Kirschberg had been quartered on the Mayor of Neustadt; that his army was then surrounding Thionville; that in that direction they had bombarded every place, and how the Austrians and Bavarians had forced the country people to convey their stores and their baggage up to the environs of the fortress, and how they had this information from them, but of any place farther off they knew nothing.

We had, therefore, nothing to do but to wait. The drawbridge on the Impflingen side had been lowered, and we were getting terribly tired of standing by with folded arms doing nothing, when about the 25th of September couriers arrived from Nancy and Strasbourg, and in an hour the town was flooded with letters and newspapers; we then learned all that occurred for the last three weeks—the taking of Longwy, which the

inhabitants had surrendered without fighting, in spite of the Ardennes and Côte-d'Or volunteers; the capitulation of Verdun, also caused by the inhabitants, whose wives and daughters had gone out to meet the King of Prussia and offered him flowers; the death of the brave commandant Beaurepaire, who had refused to sign his own dishonour; the defence of the Argonnes defiles by Dumouriez; the departure of Kellermann with the Army of the Centre, to effect a junction with him and fight a battle before Châlons; the excitement in Paris when the news arrived that treason was surrendering our fortresses, and that Brunswick was on his road to exterminate the patriots; the massacre of the nobles and the refractory priests in the different prisons; the battle of Valmy, and the Prussians' defeat; the first sitting of the Convention, which unanimously proclaimed the Republic on the 21st of September.

What imposing and terrible things had occurred during those twenty days! while we had been doing nothing; we had remained here, shut in by a wretched little prince, who did not even think it worth his while to attack us. When we thought of this we felt indignant, and we began to cry—

"Are we to rot here to the end of the war? If the Prussians are beaten let us cut off their retreat!"

In the opinion of others the better course would be to fall upon their principal magazines along the Rhine, about ten or twelve hours' march from us, which would be very easily done, and the Republic would gain by it. Such were the ideas fermenting in all the regiments, and people began to cry out that our generals were traitors, since they took no advantage of such a good opportunity; a revolt was imminent, when most fortu-

nately on the 29th of September Custine returned, accompanied by his staff. It was pouring with rain, but that did not hinder the general from having the rappel beaten, ordering the cavalry to mount, and the infantry to buckle on their knapsacks and to march immediately, some by the Germersheim road, the others by Weingarten; we had then got what we wanted, and we ought to be satisfied. Every one understood there could not be a better arranged surprise; for any spies who might be at Landau could not have time to warn the enemy to evacuate his magazines, and we should be there as soon as they could be.

Yes, so far so good; but after cartridges had been served out, as each battalion filed out one after the other in the night, under the old gates with their impending portcullis, as we heard our own footfall on the two bridges amidst rain and wind; and once clear of all the outworks, we were obliged to see as well as we could in this darkness, without knowing our road, and the rain pouring off our hats like a stream from a gutter; the sound of steps which go on without stopping for hours together; the neighing of the horses harnessed to the guns in the rear, not a star visible in the sky, not a ray of moonlight piercing the dark and heavy clouds; then, after all, the pleasure of setting out to take the enemy's magazines by surprise was not so very great.

All I can now recollect about the march, in which we could not see one another, nor light a pipe on account of the rain and the wind, is that from time to time horsemen came along by our column crying out—

"Get on, get on, quicken your step; we must be there by daybreak."

A comrade would say, "Twelve o'clock — one — two."

And the rain never left off. It made an endless murmuring noise in the fields.

As we marched through a village the dogs would begin to bark, but when they found out how many we were they used to hide themselves, and we defiled without seeing a soul. Once I remember passing by a house where they were baking bread; its little windows were lighted up, and the smell of new bread made us all say, as we turned our heads—

"How good that smells!"

Long after we had passed through that village I thought about Maître Jean's bakehouse, the kitchen at the Three Pigeons, the warmth, the reflection of the fire on the saucepans, the dripping-cake and the rest of it. I said to myself—"If I had not been so fond of liberty I should have been better off there, my feet in my sabots behind the stove, than on the high road with my back and legs as wet as if I had been in the river." These reflections occurred to me often enough, and I am sure they did the same to most of my comrades. One cannot help it: on a night march the idea of one's village and friends at home is constantly presenting itself.

At last we had already marched more than seven leagues since we left Landau, when a narrow streak of pale light in the distance against a dark background warned us that it might be about four in the morning. The approaching daylight gladdened our hearts, and Father Jean-Baptiste, who was marching next to me like a young man, in spite of his grey hair and great cowskin knapsack, said to me gaily—

"Well, Michel, we are getting nearer them now. I hope those rascally Kaiserlicks have not evacuated their magazines."

By degrees, as day broke, we could see at the end of a great plain certain patches of light; it was where the Rhine had overflowed its banks. When one looked at one's comrades, covered with mud up to their necks; the mounted officers on the slippery, shining road; in our rear the cannon and their tumbrils; dragoons in their long white cloaks tightened round their legs, their caps sunk down with wet; in front hussars and chasseurs splashed with mud; all marching on, and yet apparently halted in this great plain—when one saw all this one could not help saying to oneself—

"We must be between five and six thousand men, and yet we seem nothing at all."

At seven we reached a large village, where we halted to make our soup; the whole corps d'armée, cavalry and infantry, bivouacked in the vicinity; the guns and baggage alone remained in the road.

As soon as we had piled arms, Jean-Baptiste, Sôme, and I were on fatigue duty. It was in this village that I first saw requisition made for wood, bread, meat, &c. How the poor creatures appealed to Heaven while their oxen and their cows were dragged out of their stables and slaughtered in the street, then skinned and divided by quarters to every company! Each squad had its share led up by its corporal, and immediately made room for others.

Custine, who was surrounded by half the village in tears and groans, could only say—"My friends, such is war; your dukes, and kings, and emperors have chosen this state of things—go and complain to them."

As we returned from bivouac, carrying our rations of beef across a pole between us, we could see hundreds of fires burning brightly in the fields along the Spire; clouds of smoke covered the plain; we joked and watched while the pot boiled. In the space of an hour and a-half everything was cooked and eaten. We started again without troubling ourselves about the cost. The peasants had seen us march by; they were as good as ruined for the next twenty years.

I remember on leaving this village a long line of well-wooded hills stretched away on our left; an old castle stood about half-way up one of these hills, and Marc Divès, who with his father had smuggled goods between Forbach and Mayence, told us that it was Neustadt.

We no longer kept to the high road, but took to cross-roads, which were very bad for the guns and convoys; we were obliged to shove the wheels along, too; sometimes six or seven horses could with difficulty drag our small field-pieces out of the ruts.

About eleven we saw on our right, near the Rhine, long files of troops, principally cavalry, marching in the same direction as ourselves. At first we thought they were the Prussians; but we were soon told that two more columns of patriots were coming, one by Weingarten, and another along the Rhine by Germersheim; the two roads branched off farther on.

We had hardly made out this column before some of our comrades discovered the towers of a town in one of the turns of the Rhine. They pointed them out, then stopped and cried out—

"There are the magazines—there they are—they are ours!"

And in spite of the fatigue attendant on so long a march, they waved their hats and were glad. I was in the grenadier company, and I can see now my great red plume, shaped like a pear, swinging about as I waved my hat. We were extraordinarily well satisfied. The long line of cannon, tumbrils, and baggage, formed closer order; even the horses seemed to comprehend that we were drawing near the magazines, but perhaps that was because the drivers used their whips more freely.

The other column was commanded by Neuwinger, an old officer who had joined again as a volunteer six months before; the Republic had just made him lieutenant-general. We nearly united our forces as we came out on the high road from Worms to Spires, which leads straight down to the Rhine. Then we could see, about a thousand or twelve hundred yards on our right, the church towers and even the houses in Spires, and its decayed old ramparts; farther on, the river covered with boats.

When this view presented itself to the two columns, they halted and began to sing the Marseillaise. Neuwinger, Houchard, Custine, all belonging to our own part of the country, were going to lead us into action. Neuwinger, who was a native of Phalsbourg, came and shook the commandant Meunier by the hand; as he rode past us he cried out—

"I hope the men of the Sarrebourg district will distinguish themselves to-day."

He laughed, and we all shouted, "The Republic for ever! liberty for ever!"

At the same moment order was given for us to leave the high road and march upon Spires in order of battle.

As yet no appearance of the enemy; when on looking to the left of the town we made out a long deep line of white coats behind the hedges and walls of the gardens which lay under the ramparts. My eyes were then but twenty years old, and notwithstanding the distance, I could see that the Austrians were putting their guns in position behind some hastily-constructed works. In front of the town, between two old towers, I also saw a crowd of persons, men and women, townspeople no doubt, come to see what was going on. But they did not remain long where they were, for as we approached they all ran off and disappeared through the old gate.

It might have been two in the afternoon; the weather was clear; we advanced in line of battle across the fields; each battalion had two eight-pounders and sixteen artillerymen to serve them; we marched at the double, our feet covered with mud, and our muskets on our shoulders. The cavalry, dragoons, chasseurs, and hussars deployed on our flanks; and the Rhine, which had overflowed, leaving hedges, trees, and little hillocks surrounded with water, almost surrounded us. Nothing was heard but the steps of men and stamping of horses.

As we marched on, with our heads up, looking at the Austrians, a long line of white smoke showed itself from a rising ground; then succeeded the whizzing sound of cannon-balls, and two seconds later came the roar of the discharge, which sounded like thunder. I had never heard anything like it before. All our officers rushed to the front and cried, "Halt! halt! Dress your ranks."

The 2nd Chasseurs and the 17th Dragoons on the

right moved forward to turn the hill, but as in this direction the Rhine extended like a looking-glass as far as one could see, they had some considerable distance to go.

The Austrians continued firing. As for me, curiosity mastered every other feeling: I kept looking in all directions. I just saw Custine surrounded by his staff on the high road; he gave some orders; officers galloped off; they came to us, and we soon heard them call out—

"Guns to the front!"

The chasseurs and dragoons were already at some distance; we could hardly distinguish them along the course of the river.

Our small eight-pounder field-pieces and four howitzers, in line behind a slight elevation, which served as an epaulment, then opened fire; their shells and balls had the range of the hill; but the enemy had also howitzers in their battery, and then it was that I heard the sound of a shell for the first time; it is quite gentle, like the whistling of a bird; we could none of us understand it; our ears were deafened by the noise from our own guns, and when the ground in our front was ploughed up into funnel-shaped holes we began to think it was mined.

This noise continued for about twenty minutes, when we heard the command "Forward!" all along the line. At the same time the drums began to beat the charge, and the Marseillaise rose above the din. We all marched forward; but the enemy, instead of waiting for us, fell back into the town. We could see them running between the hedges and walls which bordered the hill, and when we got on the top of it we saw the 17th

Dragoons coming up with four hundred Austrian prisoners. The others, about three or four thousand, got back safe into Spires, and began firing again upon us from the ramparts.

Until then all had gone off well. The enemy's fire had killed but a few, but now real fighting was going to begin.

Three Breton battalions and our own deployed near the ramparts, which are old walls similar to those at Wissembourg. In front of us was a gate, and before the gate a drawbridge across the moat. About two or three hundred yards off the Austrians wanted to raise the drawbridge, but it was so heavy and rusted that though the whole of the guard tried their best, they could not make it move. We kept firing at the men at the post; those on the ramparts returned our fire; several of our men had already fallen, when Neuwinger hurried up shouting out, "Forward, mountaineers, forward!" and we began to run; the bridge was just moving; it fell back on its pillars with a dreadful noise, and our grenadier company, led by Commandant Meunier, disappeared like a herd of cattle through the archway. Unfortunately this archway was closed at the end by a door, made of strong timber, clamped with iron crossbars and bolts as big as one's head. From the tops of the towers on the right and the left the Austrians kept firing on the bridge behind us. The Bretons, exposed to this fire without the possibility of returning it, were crying out to us to set forward, and crowded in upon us to get under shelter of the archway. I thought all was lost, for the Austrians had begun to fire on us through holes in the door—their pieces almost touched us. Many of my

comrades were marked for life by grains of powder received in the face that day.

Imagine, if you can, the crash and noise under this old archway. Muskets discharged at a distance of four yards, the wounded trodden underfoot, smoke and flame, curses and cries of distress, shouts for the guns, and then the Bretons fall back, leaving their killed and wounded on the bridge!

How can we ever get out of this? How can we recross the bridge under the fire from the ramparts?

I was just saying to myself, "It is all over!" when the Bretons came back. Neuwinger, on horseback, seemed to be carried by them; they brought him along shouting, "Make way, make way!" and then the noise and the firing began worse than before.

This time the Bretons brought axes with them, and you ought to have heard the continuous blows of hatchets against the door. Nothing was visible but smoke. Musket-shots were fired, splinters of oak flew about, the wounded cried, and the heavy door trembled. I had picked up an axe, covered with blood, and I struck at the door, and cried as the others did, "Conquer or die!"

My face was covered with sweat; by the light of every discharge I could see my comrades' pale faces all round me. The old door would have fallen in before had it not been kept together by its ironwork; it creaked, but did not fall. At last, fortunately, the half-door in the middle gave way, and five or six grenadiers crawled through. The Austrians had retreated; our whole company then passed, and the Bretons followed us. We thought we had won the day when we drew back the bolts of the great door; but what a

disappointment! A hundred yards further, on the other side of a ditch, crossed by a bridge, was a second door as strong as the first; we had only taken the outwork, and now we had to carry the body of the place. I remember nothing more frightful; for a rolling fire opened upon us from the ramparts, and we should none of us have left the place alive if Custine had not come up with two howitzers, which he put in position under the archway.

Five minutes afterwards the second gate was down, and our battalion debouched into the principal street of Spires under a very hot fire. The Austrians had barricaded themselves in the houses; smoke was pouring from every window, from which their muskets were continually presented, fired, and withdrawn. Meunier ordered us to dislodge them to allow the column to defile; and while we carried out his orders, broke down the doors and fought with the Kaiserlicks on the staircases, in the rooms, with bayonets and butts of muskets. While we were driving these poor devils into the garrets as they cried, "Pardône, Françôse!" our column marched into the town, with its guns in front to pour grape into whatever opposed its passage.

At the end of a quarter of an hour the fortress was full of our troops—cavalry, infantry, and artillery; and three thousand five hundred Austrians, with their general, Winckelmann, laid down their arms; four hundred were drowned endeavouring to cross the Rhine. We were also masters of the magazines, for except his military chest the enemy had not time to transport his stores to the other bank of the Rhine.

It is hardly necessary to give you any description of our enthusiasm on this our first victory, or to tell you

how pleased we were to find we still retained our arms and legs in good condition; or to say what pleasure I should feel in writing an account of this to Chauvel, Margaret, and my father. Well, it is certainly very satisfactory to have escaped so fortunately.

I remember how, in the middle of all the battalions, squadrons, and regiments formed in a square on the Place d'Armes, Custine complimented and praised us.

He had a loud voice, but among the cries and shouts of this multitude of men we could not understand what he said; but the captains of companies in his name gave us great credit for not having pillaged the town, which would have been no more than usual, since it had been taken by storm. That was what they said to us, and it did more harm than good, for no one had thought of doing so, and then many among us formed different ideas of war, and regretted not having profited by the opportunity.

Such was the battle of Spires—our first affair—in which the battalion lost forty-two men; now I will tell you something else.

The commissaries in command levied contributions on the bishops and canons for the benefit of the nation; the burghers and the people fraternised with us, and it was already question of making an attempt on the magazines at Worms, which were said to be larger and better supplied than those of Spires, when something fresh occurred.

The second day, about six in the morning, as I was walking about the town, I suddenly heard the générale beaten. My first idea was that we were attacked; I ran to the barrack—our battalion had just left. I rushed in and seized my musket and hurried off. All along the

streets I saw grenadiers and volunteers coming out of the churches and shops carrying bundles, and the burghers running out of their houses crying out, "Thieves!" In fact they had begun to plunder the town. The générale was still beaten on the Place d'Armes. I hurried along, when, as I passed through a narrow street where there was a shop in which they sold provisions, I saw a cart belonging to a cantinière standing at the door, a two-wheeled cart with a little horse with long mane and tail harnessed to it, with a grey cloth awning. In the fore part of this cart a tall thin woman was standing, with naked arms and a short red petticoat, her light hair was twisted in a knot on the top of her head, and she was stowing away barrels of provisions and boxes of all sorts which a volunteer was handing to her out of a window. She packed everything away under the awning, and was evidently in a great hurry, as if she was doing what she ought not. There was a sentry-box close to the shop door, but there was no sentry; he was probably at work with his comrades robbing the churches or the shops close by.

When I saw how they were robbing the shops, which had cost us so much trouble to win only two days previously, I stopped in a rage. I walked up to this woman, and who do you think I saw? Lisbeth, my sister Lisbeth, whom I had not seen since she left us to go to Wasselonne in 1783. I called out—

"What are you doing there?"

She turned round—her cheeks were red and her eyes were shining in her greed for plunder—and said to me—

"Why, it's Michel! Are you a volunteer?"

"Yes; but what are you about, you wretch?"

"Oh," said she, "nothing particular."

At the same time the volunteer came out of the shop and shut the door.

I saw he was afraid of me, for directly afterwards he cried—

"We are going to take all this to head-quarters; it will be so much saved from the marauders."

He was a man from the South, dark, square-built, with black moustaches and whiskers. Lisbeth began to laugh, and called out—

"It's my brother."

On which he said to me—

"Are you my wife's brother? Shake hands, brother-in-law."

They both laughed, and hurried their cart along as fast as possible, looking about to see if they were followed.

Lisbeth kept whipping her horse, and her husband stepped out by the side of the cart, muttering as he went—

"The general levies contributions, why should not we levy contributions too? Hup! hup!"

I was disgusted at such barefaced robbery, but I saw, on looking at Lisbeth's husband, that any remonstrance I could make would only be useless, they agreed only too well together on the subject; so I held my tongue, and they turned into a small street which led to the quay. I walked on towards the Place, while Lisbeth called after me—

"Come and see us at the barracks of the third battalion of Paris Federal Volunteers."

Fancy how I felt when I reached the Place, and found the general in a furious passion surrounded by

his officers. The Bretagne regiment had by his orders just arrested a captain and two volunteer sergeants and a dozen men.

There they stood, inside the square, with their epaulettes torn off, clothes in disorder, degraded in fact; and in a corner of the Place a court-martial chosen out of their own battalion was sitting, while the general stormed and raged.

In ten minutes the court-martial passed sentence upon them. A strong picket took charge of the plunderers and marched them off to the ramparts. We saw them go away, and every one shuddered. A few minutes after we heard the report of firearms.

The general then said the honour of the army was saved. The regiments and battalions returned to their barracks, and all pillage stopped.

I felt my heart heavy within me; I was miserable enough, and yet I was glad to know my sister was at Spircs, married, to a vagabond it is true, but I could not help that. Well, the same evening I went to the cantine of the 3rd battalion of Paris Federals. It was eight years ago that Lisbeth climbed up the hill at the Baraques, with her bundle in her hand, to go to Toussaint, at Wasselonne; now she had grown into a tall, strong woman, with quick eyes, and a hard expression of face like her mother.

CHAPTER III.

THE third battalion of the armed Paris sections were quartered at the port. I noticed as I approached the Rhine immense sheds where goods were stowed away in depôt before they were put on board vessels in the river; they were now converted into barracks. Under these sheds, which were closed by awnings at either end, were benches, chairs, and a quantity of straw for them to lie on. They were singing, drinking, and playing at cards, young and old, some in red caps, some in cocked hats; and I then noticed how right Chauvel was when he told us how the Parisian lower classes live everywhere as they did in their old streets at home without troubling themselves about anything or any one. They are a race of little, dried-up, thin, pale, and impudent men, who will never make good soldiers, because they are always arguing, and scoff at everything, especially at their officers. It is of no use trying to give oneself airs with the Paris federals, they would soon put you down; these fellows, of every

condition in life, tutoyed every one, from the commandant to the private.

When I went in a thin little fellow began to raise a laugh against me by crowing like a cock, but I took no notice of him, and walked up to a table and asked for the citoyenne Lisbeth, cantinière to the 3rd battalion of Paris Federals. An old man, in a red cap and whiskers to match, who was playing cards and smoking, asked, without turning his head—

"What do you want with the citoyenne? She is my sister."

Then they all turned round and stared at me, and the little thin man, pointing out the canvas at the end of the shed, said—

"You have only to knock at the door."

This was a large awning stretched across the end to keep off the wind from the Rhine; as I approached I could see a bright fire through the rents in it. Pushing it aside I found myself in another shed smaller than the first in which the Parisians had established their cantine. Twenty or thirty of them were cooking for the battalion; some were skimming the soup-kettle, others washing the salad, some more were peeling onions or plucking fowls. Lisbeth, with her sleeves tucked up and a silk handkerchief tied round her head, was filling bottles from a large barrel; she seemed particularly well pleased; while her husband, Sergeant Marescot, sat by on a box, his elbow on his knee, contentedly smoking his pipe, and looked on at the others as they worked; there he was, master of the house.

Lisbeth, who saw me directly, began to call out "Ha! here you are, Michel, just in time; now for a feast!"

Of course I understood where it all came from, but as she put her long arms round my neck and asked after father and mother, brothers and sisters, I could not help feeling somewhat softened. She took my sword and cap from me and laid them on a chair, and her husband came and shook hands with me, winking his eye and grinning all the time. He looked just like a fox.

"All right, brother," said he; "glad to see you."

The others looked at me, patted me on the back, called me citizen brother-in-law, cousin Michel, patriot mountaineer, as if they had known me for ten years.

Great coppers were on the fire, and the smell of the cookery was delicious, and when we sat down in about an hour to dinner, it was quite a repast fit for an aristocrat. I never fared better, ham and sausages especially good. We were in the Mayence district, and the wine the very best; it must have come from the bishops' and canons' cellar; and though the recollection that it was all the result of pillage would sometimes obtrude itself, the federals' contentment and satisfaction was contagious. I said to myself—

"After all the wine is drawn, some one must drink it; it may just as well do me good as any one else."

That night I learned much of Parisian waggishness. I heard them laugh and turn kings, princes, and bishops into ridicule, and sing songs which were not fit to be repeated. This all seemed natural to them. There was a tall man with one eye who began singing love songs, accompanying himself on a violin. His voice was quite cracked; but he sang so well, and turned up his eyes to the roof with such a natural air of despair, that

it quite chilled me to listen to him; and when he began to sing about his country, and his love, and his old father, I was obliged to go out to hide my distress, for I could but think of Margaret. Two minutes later, when I went in again, it was all changed; the one-eyed man was dancing on one leg, playing all sorts of tricks, and playing the clarionette with his nose. There you have the Parisians.

Lisbeth seemed to enjoy much consideration among the federals; when she spoke and talked even nonsense they laughed, and cried out—

"Ha! ha! ha! Bravo, citoyenne, bravo!"

I can only say of her that she was a fine woman, tall, bold, and unscrupulous, a real cantinière, who was quite capable of handling a musket if necessary; in fact, the image of her mother, only taller and stronger. For all that, I thought, as I saw the admiration the federals obviously had for her—

"If you had only seen her in days gone by, with naked feet, running in the snow or the dust on the road after carriages, and calling out, "Only a halfpenny, my lords, for the love of God," you would be rather astonished to be told she was the same person.

After all she was no worse than others whom I have seen driving about in carriages with two tall lacqueys standing up behind; we must not always be looking back.

These Parisians were drinking to the "Ami du Peuple;" among them Citizen Marat was a sort of deity. Danton, Robespierre, Desmoulins, Collot d'Herbois, Couthon, Legendre, were of only secondary importance. The one-eyed man said this one had no courage, another no endurance, one wanted ideas, others judgment

in political matters, &c.; but, in their opinion, Marat possessed every qualification. They all cried—

"As long as Marat lives the revolution will do well; if he dies the others will break down; they will lose their heads, and will let themselves be talked over by the Girondins."

The federals were in a great rage with Custine for shooting the marauders; they called him a ci-devant. The one-eyed fellow, who wore a hat nearly three feet from corner to corner, with a cockade about as large as a wheel of a plough, talked about writing to the "Ami du Peuple," and telling them of this disgraceful action; the rest praised this suggestion; they wanted to abolish aristocratic generals.

At last they all set to work dancing; and while they were playing all sorts of antics, Marescot, sitting at a table opposite me, told me all about his marrying Lisbeth, whom he had known when she was in service with Count de Dannbach, major in the regiment of Alsace, in which he, Marescot, was a trumpeter. He told me he fell in love with her directly for her quickness, neatness, and economy, and also for her talent as a cook; having served his time he was discharged the following year in Paris, and he then married her, and they took a small tavern in the Rue Dauphine; but as since the war there was no business doing he sold his stock-in-trade, and engaged as canteen sergeant in the 3rd Federal Battalion, where they were, thank God, pretty successful.

I asked him if he was still in Paris during the September massacres; he told me he was an eye-witness, and gave me a description of them; he said they began on Sunday, the 2nd of September, about three in the after-

noon, in the Rue Dauphine, when the people murdered the prisoners who were being taken to the Abbaye, because one of them allowed himself to strike one of the men forming the escort; after that the people divided into two parties; one, composed chiefly of federals from the South, ran off to the Carmes in the Luxembourg, where several refractory bishops and priests accused of conspiracy were confined, while another and much more numerous band broke down the gates of the Abbaye prison, and killed every one on whom they could lay their hands.

About five the Council-General of the Commune sent commissioners to propose to the people to form a tribunal to judge the prisoners before putting them to death, and the carnage then stopped. The people chose twelve judges from among the bourgeois who were notorious in the quarter for their patriotism, and Citizen Maillard as president; they also named forty-one executioners, whose business it was to put to death those found guilty. After that the judges took their seats at a table in the prison lodge, the gaol register being before the president, and the executioners outside listening in the dismal court lighted up by torches; and the executions began about ten in the evening. The president would read a prisoner's name and the reason of his being arrested from the register; some federals fetched him; he was questioned, and he defended himself; if he was acquitted three federals led him away, calling out, "Hats off, an innocent man!" The mob would embrace him and give him an escort to his own house; if he was condemned the president would say, "To La Force," that the poor wretch might believe he was to be taken to the prison of La Force; some federals would thrust him into the courtyard,

repeating, "To La Force," and the executioners would despatch him by blows from sabres or thrusts from pikes and bayonets.

Some tried to defend themselves, others begged for mercy; others, again, holding down their heads and raising their arms, tried to parry the blows, and ran about the court covered with blood and calling for help; they were followed and despatched in a corner. When they were motionless all the executioners called out together, "Vive la nation!" and stationed themselves at the lodge door waiting for the arrival of another prisoner. They had wine given them from time to time, and when the wife of one of them brought him his supper, some comrade took his sword and his place.

These scenes were repeated much in the same way in all prisons, except in the case of women of bad character and Swiss officers, who were killed without trial. The priests shut up in the Carmes were not tried: the federals from the South had massacred them all, to the cry of "Remember Saint Bartholomew's day!" At Bicêtre the prisoners had barricaded themselves in the prison, and they were obliged to send for artillery to dislodge them.

Marescot repeated these horrors very calmly as he smoked his pipe; he thought it quite a matter of course, and told me it lasted for three days. Notwithstanding all the good wine I had drunk, I shuddered and felt cold all over, my heart ached; at last I could not help saying—

"But what you have been telling me is too horrible. Do you mean to say that this butchery lasted three days, and no one made any attempt to stop it? It is all very well to talk of persons being found guilty with-

out witnesses, without lawyers to defend them, nor any other proof than a memorandum on the page of a gaol-book! It is too dreadful! What was the Commune about, or the National Guard, or the ministers, or the National Assembly?"

While I spoke Marescot seemed surprised, and looked at me for a second or two out of his little black eyes.

"Why," said he, shrugging his shoulders, "they did nothing, they let the others do what they liked! Every one expected it; Marat had predicted it in his paper, and no one could prevent it. At the prison of La Force Hébert presided at the tribunal, at the Abbaye Billaud-Varennes, deputy attorney-general to the Commune, thanked the executioners in the name of their country! The Commune had released beforehand all prisoners not accused of any political crime; it paid the executioners, each man received six livres a day. As for the National Guard, they never stirred. I saw several of them standing sentry at the doors of the prisons while the massacres were taking place. The National Assembly did nothing; they sent three commissioners to the Abbaye on the evening of the 2nd to invite the people to trust to the execution of justice. They said what they had to say and went away, the massacres went on all the same, and no one ever heard anything more of them, nor of the National Legislative Assembly. Had it not been for Danton, all these valiant members of the Assembly would have run away across the Loire, led by their minister Rolland, and have abandoned Paris to Brunswick! Treason was everywhere; after pretending to accept the revolution of the 10th of August, the majority of the Legislative used every means in their power to destroy it; the

tribunal established to try the conspirators acquitted the greatest scoundrels; Champagne was overrun by émigrés, Prussians, and Austrians; they paid for their requisitions by vouchers in the name of the French king; they shot the patriots who defended themselves; the traitor Lavergne had just given up Longwy to them, and others were preparing to surrender Verdun. Once in possession of the latter place, there was nothing between them and Paris; the aristocrats in prison there knew it; they drank, and rejoiced, and cried 'Patience, it will be our turn soon, Brunswick is coming!' Every day vagabonds paid to terrify the population ran about the streets, calling out, 'Shut your shops, the Prussians and Austrians are at your gates;' or else, 'The Bretons are coming.' It was one continual alarm; then they beat the générale, and rang the alarm bells. It was absolutely necessary to make an end of these traitors, and let them see that since they stood at nothing to ruin their country, so we would hesitate at nothing to save her. Good heavens! I do not mean to deny that innocent people lost their lives in these massacres, it is very possible some did. But if the Prussians instead of losing had won the battle of Valmy, if they had entered Paris with the émigrés, do you believe they would have given the patriots a trial? No, they would have been shot in companies, as Brunswick told them in his proclamation; you would have seen other massacres besides those of September. So what the Prussians and émigrés would have done to the nation, in order to re-establish the ancien régime and all sorts of privileges, that did the people to a thousand or twelve hundred conspirators, for the sake of saving the revolution and the rights of man. If you cannot

understand all this, you cannot be a true sans-culotte."

Marescot was right, I was not a true sans-culotte; in spite of his explanations these massacres disgusted me; I was ashamed for our Republic. Executioners are executioners: put a king's crown, a bishop's mitre, or a working man's cap on their heads, I class them all together.

The most reasonable remark to make on this affair is that the Royalists were also very much to blame; they ought not to have invited foreigners to their assistance; our quarrel should have been decided among ourselves; then Longwy and Verdun would not have been sold, and the massacres would not have taken place. The first blame lies at the door of the traitors and their friend the Duke of Brunswick, who threatened to burn Paris and shoot all the patriots; that is the truth.

That evening I went back to barracks late. The next day, while I was on guard at the Manheim Gate, about three in the afternoon, we saw four battalions of grenadiers, one of national volunteers, a regiment of mounted chasseurs, and artillery in proportion, march by. A report was spread that the Austrian general—the same who had left only four thousand men to defend the magazines at Spires—was moving by forced marches to succour Worms and Mayence, with an army of twelve thousand men. But next day we heard he was too late. Our troops entered Worms unopposed. The inhabitants received them crying, "Vive la nation!" and the authorities wore the tricolour cockade.

Which, however, did not prevent our commissary-in-chief, Citizen Pierre Blanchard, from levying a contribution of twelve hundred thousand livres in crowns,

half on the town which had once received the émigrés with the white cockade, and then cried, "Vive le roi!" and half on the bishops and canons, who would willingly have seen us all in hell. We had already levied four hundred and fifty thousand livres on the chapter at Spires, and a hundred and thirty thousand on the private clergy there, in consequence of their allowing the fabrication of forged assignats, which had been going on for two years. In addition to this, convoys of flour, barley, oats, and hay, camping apparatus, clothing, shoes, shirts, and pantaloons, in boxes, bales, and barrels, covered the road to Laudun day and night; all we had to do was to put the horses and carts of the country people in requisition, and to have them escorted by small detachments; for once the German newspapers had not said a word too much about the good supplies in their magazines; one ought always to say what is true.

The clothing, equipment, and arming of the army of the Rhine was completed at Spires. War commissioners attended to everything; they supplied our battalion with a tent for every sixteen men; the quartermaster's department, the deputy-adjutant-general, workmen, police guards, captains, vivandiers, all had their tents made of strong canvas, with poles and pegs; the lieutenants were two in one tent. Every tent for sixteen men had two boilers, two mess-kids, two large water-cans, two pickaxes, two spades, two axes, and two billhooks for cutting wood. With such means as these did we make three terrible campaigns.

The cavalry had a tent for every eight men, and everything needful for mounted men, cords, picket-pegs, forage-nets—everything, in fact.

Of course we were all the more pleased with these things that we had won them for ourselves, and that they had not cost the Republic a sou.

But if they had permitted the town to be pillaged, a few scoundrels would have become rich, and the defenders of liberty would have perished from want. It is very unfortunate that succeeding generals did not follow Custine's example; the soldiers and volunteers would have suffered less, nor would so many robbers have been seen rolling in luxury, both they and their children and their children's children, a thing disgraceful to a degree when one knows how their property was acquired. But even at the best of times there is always some fault to find; while some are devoting themselves in the service of their country there are others who are always grasping at and enriching themselves at the expense of those whom they consider as fools because they can feel and be honest.

CHAPTER IV.

THE stores found at Spires and Worms established us afresh; we were armed, clothed, and equipped as soldiers ought to be; we were in a state to serve a campaign; how many others would have wished to have been in our place! I do not mean the Prussians only, now in full retreat along the muddy roads in Champagne; those poor wretches were dying of dysentery in consequence of eating grapes; they abandoned their guns, tumbrils, and baggage. They marched through Verdun and Longwy without once turning to fight; it was despotism in flight.

Our peasantry destroyed these poor creatures by dozens behind the hedges, on the roads, in the woods; our village wells were full of them; every one did the same, even the women, and Marat still said enough was not done. He reproached Dumouriez with having left them a door by which to escape; he would have taken Brunswick and Frederick William prisoners, and have hanged them as a warning to other kings who might dare to invade us. He was quite right, for it wa

known afterwards that our Government had made a secret agreement with the King of Prussia.

In all these six weeks' campaign we had been fortunate; the Prussians were in retreat; the Austrians and émigrés who had remained behind to bombard Lille, in Flanders, had just raised the siege; General Anselme in the South was invading the province of Nice; the Vendeans had been put down for a time; everything was going on well, and we had these good news from day to day when the bulletin from the Convention was published. Carnot and Prieur had established this very good practice with us; some months later, in June, 1793, it was carried out in all the armies belonging to the Republic.

Thus every soldier was acquainted with the causes of the war; he knew what they were saying and doing in Paris, and, therefore, instead of fighting like a brute, I am now able to write this history to you.

Some days after the taking of Spires, on the 17th of October, 1793, one morning we had orders to march. Knapsacks were strapped on, our gaiters buttoned, and we left by the Manheim gate on the road to Worms without any leave-taking. The whole army either in Spires or the neighbourhood followed us. It did not rain, but the weather was damp; fogs from the Rhine continued to cover the country.

After leaving the town we took a road to the left through wood and heather, and for six hours nothing but beeches, oaks, firs, and birches were visible to us through the fog.

We saw nothing except sometimes remains of old walls, ruins of old castles blackened by smoke, with

neither roofs, doors, nor windows; then old Sôme would remark—

"Turenne was here about a hundred years ago; he caused four hundred towns, villages, small market towns and castles to be burned in one night by order of Louis XIV The Bourbons carried on war in that fashion then."

One thing is certain: from the forests beyond Spires the whole length of the road running through Durckheim, Grunstadt, Oberflersheim, and farther on still, besides these old demolished buildings we fell in with leper-houses in the same ruinous condition, and gallows-trees from time to time, just as we used to have them among us before the revolution. And if the Germans only do us justice, they must always acknowledge that we were the cause of their getting rid of their feudal lords, their lazarettos, and their gallows. Had it not been for us they would still be in full enjoyment of those ancient abominations, for by force of habit they were so attached to them that we were forced to beat them over and over again to bring them to a proper way of thinking. They resembled beggars who were so used to vermin that they fancied they could not live without them, and do not feel quite at their ease in new clothes and clean linen.

But I must get on with my story. Once out of these extensive woods we reached a wine-growing country, the most beautiful I ever saw. It covered innumerable slopes. The Germans are so laborious, and so fond of good wine, that in order to obtain it they carry manure on men's backs four or five hundred feet up steep ascents; they have lines of narrow steps which rise by stages all along the hills. I was very much pleased to

see it. We have drunk their wine, and it is good; both white and red have a delicious flavour, but one must not drink too much of it; two bottles will put you under the table.

Though war was going on these good people were finishing their vintage, and with baskets on their backs they went up and down their steps, stopping sometimes on the top of the shining iron-coloured rocks to look at us. We called "Vive la République!" to them, and men and women answered us readily, waving their hats and their hands. If nations could only understand one another, if they could get rid of the knaves who keep them at variance, what a paradise this world would be! At two our column halted in a large village to eat our dinners.

At three we left this small market town, and about nine in the evening we entered the small town of Alzey, not far from Mayence. We had marched sixteen leagues since morning, and many of us were quite exhausted.

I shall never forget Alzey. We arrived about half-an-hour after the advanced guard, and the little place was already swarming with troops; mounted chasseurs, hussars, gendarmes, and volunteers were moving about the streets; and trumpet-calls to bring the men back to their squadrons, and the rolling of the drums, filled the valley. Fortunately, Jean-Baptiste Sôme, Jean Rat, Marc Divès, I, and two or three other comrades were billeted on a postmaster at the entrance of the faubourg. We had rooms upstairs overlooking an old yard full of carriages, and the master invited us to sup with him.

The great kitchen below was in a blaze; it was rather

different to Maître Jean's at Baraques, for this man was wealthy, and kept servants, postillions, and couriers, and when the National Dragoons arrived you could hear nothing but stamping, neighing, and shouting in the yard; every man wanted to put his horse in the stable. But we were quite unconcerned; we had only to change our shoes and gaiters, and then we went down and dried ourselves at the fire.

From every corner of the kitchen the female servants, and even the young ladies of the family, came to look at us in our large hats, our long damp coats streaming before the fire, and our cross-belts; they were curious to see these Republicans, and the moment one of us turned his head to see if they were pretty, they ran away laughing and pushing one another out into the dark passage.

The postmaster himself soon appeared. He was a spare, dark man, with rather a hooked nose and black eyes; he wore top-boots with spurs, and leather breeches.

"Citizen volunteers," said he in good French, "be so good as to follow me."

We saw the cloth laid in a lofty room, with a beautiful lamp hanging from the ceiling, but his wife and daughters had disappeared.

We sat down, and the master of the house, with a grave air, waited upon us himself.

Every minute a servant, a postillion, or a courier came and reported to him what was doing out of doors, while he, without disturbing himself, gave them their orders; he carved the meat, poured out the wine, and let us want for nothing. We talked about our campaign, that of the Prussians in the Argone, about the

evolution, &c. This most sensible man talked on every subject in an old-fashioned French which it was a pleasure to hear. Several of our comrades who were very tired went to bed; old Sôme, Divès, and I were alone at table. It was about eleven, and with the exception of the challenge of the sentries on the hills at a distance, all other noises in the town and suburbs had ceased. Sôme lighted his pipe, and quietly began to smoke; and as the master filled up our glasses, I took the liberty of saying to him—

"But, citizen, you speak as good French as we do; do you not belong to the nation?"

"Yes," said he, "I am the descendant of an old Frenchman, one of those driven out of France at the revocation of the edict of Nantes."

He seemed thoughtful; and when I reflected that this man was of the same religion as Margaret, French like ourselves, I was touched. I told him about Chauvel, the old constituent member, now a member of the Convention, how he had chosen me to be his son-in-law; how his daughter loved me, and that they were Calvinists, as he was.

"You are fortunate, young man," said he, "to belong to respectable people."

Then more confidentially he quietly, but forcibly, told us that his grandfather, Jacques Merlin, lived in the Messin, near Servigny, at the time of the dragonnades, where he had a house, stables, and lands; exercising his religion without wronging any one; when the great King Louis XIV., a depraved character, after having lived with profligate women, even during the queen's lifetime, and set an example of everything that was bad, thought, as do all bad characters when their intel-

lect leaves them, that by calling on the priests for absolution from his sins he should be entitled to sit on the right hand of our Lord for ever and ever. But the priests, taking advantage of his weakness, refused to give him absolution, except on the condition of exterminating the enemies of the Romish Church. Then this heartless and senseless libertine gave orders for the conversion of the Protestants all through France, by all possible means, separating mothers from their children, sending fathers of families to the galleys, confiscating their property, plundering, burning, and massacring his own subjects, putting them to death on the wheel, and reducing them to despair.

He went on to tell us that these good people resolved to endure everything rather than adopt the religion of such a monster; and hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen, taking their old men, wives, and children with them, fled to the foreigner in spite of the lines of gendarmes established all along the frontiers to stop them; these heads of families being the most respectable, intelligent, and laborious workmen and traders in their several provinces, carried the trade and industry of France elsewhere; Germany, England, Holland, and even America had then begun to excel in silk-weaving, tanning leather, making tapestry, glass, china, and quantities of other manufactures which constitute a nation's wealth; the old debauchee continuing to make war and spend money as recklessly as ever, and having deprived himself of the labour and economy of so many thousand industrious people to help him to meet his expenses, had ruined his country completely. This great King Louis XIV., in his old age, when he could keep his grasp on nothing, and when

everything was giving way under him, cried in his despair—

"My God, how Thou treatest me after all I have done for Thee!"

Which gives a good idea of the folly of such a man, who could believe that the Creator, who has made worlds out of nothing by the force of His will, could be in want of the services of such a worthless person. At last he died in squalor, leaving an enormous deficit, which for want of better management had only increased under Louis XV and the regent, and had finally obliged Louis XVI. to convoke the notables and then the States-General, whence came our revolution, the declaration of the rights of man, the abolition of privileges, and all the blessings which the people would enjoy, and the rooting out of the debauched and the idle, who would be obliged to work for their living like the rest.

This is what this old Frenchman related to us.

But what affected me most was the account he gave us of the arrival of the king's dragoons one evening at his grandfather's, bringing an order for the immediate conversion of the whole family, who established themselves at the farm; sleeping in their boots and spurs in the old people's bed; robbing them of everything; using their whips to them, preventing the mother from nursing her child, to induce her to forsake her God; at last reducing them to such a state of despair, that they all fled in the night to the woods, leaving the old house built by their ancestors, the lands bought with their labour and cultivated by the sweat of their brows, and hunted by the gendarmes like a pack of wolves. Yes, such things as these had their effect on me. Then came the state of destitution. These poor creatures

were in a foreign land, without money, without bread, helpless and friendless; persons accustomed to live in comfort, to work for their bread; the wife and young daughters obliged to become domestic servants to others; the old man bending over his work—hard work indeed, after having laboured all his life, when rest was necessary.

What a story! and all this at the will of a wicked old man, who imagined that such was the road to salvation.

Finally the postmaster told us that after losing all their property in this manner, his grandfather and grandmother had succeeded in saving some money before their death, and their children and grandchildren, having the example of labour and honesty before their eyes, had become even rich and respected in their adopted country.

Then I asked him—

"Have you never regretted your name of Frenchman? have you no thought left for your old country? We have never done you any harm; the king alone is to blame, acting under the advice of the bishops who banished you; and at that time people's ignorance was so great that they deserve pity more than hatred."

His reply was—

"As long as the Bourbons reigned in France, none of us regretted his country; but now that the nation has risen, has proclaimed the rights of man and taken up arms to defend them against despots, our old feelings have returned, and every one of us can again say with pride, 'I am a Frenchman!'"

While he spoke he turned pale; he got up to hide his feelings, and walked up and down the room with his

hands behind him and his head on his breast. Then Jean-Baptiste Sôme, who had been listening thoughtfully with his elbows on the table, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and said—

"Well, that is even worse than the September massacres; the country was in no danger; no traitors surrendered our strongholds; there was no Prussian invasion of Champagne; these poor Protestants were not conspiring against their country; they kept quiet, and only asked to be allowed to worship God after their manner. But it is twelve o'clock; we had better go to bed, for the column begins its march early to-morrow morning."

We all got up, and the postmaster lighted a little lamp, and, showing us the way upstairs, wished us good night.

These things I have never forgotten. I believe I mentioned them at the time to Margaret. The letter has been mislaid; but I do not think I have made many mistakes in repeating the words of the postmaster of Alzey. If his grandchildren are still in existence, they can read what their grandfather thought of King Louis XIV., and I think it will please them.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day we marched early to reach Mayence by Albig, Werstadt Ober-Ulm, &c. The dense fogs which had been spread over the Palatinate for the last fortnight began falling, and by midday we marched through the mud in a soaking rain, which lasted till evening. Our wide hats had this advantage over the shakos now worn, you could point the brim into a sort of gutter, and the rain did not pour down the back of your neck; but again at the end of an hour or two they flattened down on your shoulders like a pancake. We had one piece of good news on the march; the corps d'armée which left Worms the evening before, filing along the high road which follows the course of the Rhine, carried the bridge at Oppenheim, and when we arrived in front of Wintersheim Wood, about three in the afternoon, Neuwinger was already encamped on the heights of Sinden, with his right resting on the Rhine, which there makes a great bend round the forests of Mombach. Mayence lay before us about two cannon-shot distant; but as this city shelves

down to the river, we could only see one of its bastions, the horn of one half-moon, some vineyards, and the gardens of the suburbs. The woods of Wintersheim and Mombach surround the town, and between them and the ramparts valleys stretch away for miles, watered by small streams. It was in one of these valleys, with our rear to the wood and our front to Mayence, that we received orders to halt; battalions, squadrons, and regiments of the line pitched their tents along the edge of the forest; it was about four in the afternoon, and our baggage, guns, and ammunition-waggons were coming in all through the night.

Guards were posted, and we bivouacked.

Our battalion was encamped five or six hundred yards from a large mill, the people of which came to look at us in astonishment. The water from the stream, swollen by the rain, boiled over the two wheels, and in the distance, at the bottom of the valley, we could see the Rhine flow foaming along. Fatigue parties were sent out for our rations, and we tried to light our fires, which, as we had only green wood, was rather difficult.

Fortunately for the miller, Custine and his staff took up their quarters in the mill; an hour later there would have been neither hay nor straw nor flour for him and his people; it is the same old story—in war time neither good nor bad reasons are of any use while the enemy is encamped close by.

A detachment of hussars surrounded the mill, and these good people little suspected how lucky they were to have a general to entertain instead of a whole division.

At last the fires were lighted; the fatigue parties brought us our rations, and our pots began to boil.

The night was very dark; it had ceased raining for some time, but the water still dripped from the trees and shone by the light of the encampment fires like a shower of sparks; very pretty to look at, but when one is tired out it was not very amusing. That night I slept on the ground by the side of my comrades, and notwithstanding the damp I slept very well.

The next day, the 19th of October, 1792, we had to attack one or two of the gates of Mayence, as we had done at Spires; we saw it would cost us more on account of the outworks and the half-moon batteries, which would not fail to sweep the bridges both right and left in front and rear as soon as we appeared on them. Nevertheless, when one has once escaped, one begins to expect to do so always, and besides, generals often send in advance those troops which have not yet been much exposed; once engaged they must stand to it, for they are still more exposed if they retreat.

God be thanked, the Governor of Mayence was not made of the same stuff as that of Spires; he was a court officer, a courtier converted into a general by his prince; at their master's will they either wear a gold key at their backs or take the command of an army. Custine having had intelligence from some of our German republican friends that the Baron de Gimnich was one of that stamp, thought he might perhaps open his gates to us himself if he was made to see the danger he would run by defending them; it was one of the greatest comedies I ever saw in my life; our whole army enjoyed it immensely then.

You must know that the garrison of Mayence, what with the troops of the circles, as well as Austrians, chasseurs and noblemen's servants, burgher guards,

and university volunteers, amounted to more than six thousand men. The Austrian garrison at Spires did not consist of more than half that number, and the fortifications of Spires, either for strength or extended, could not be compared for a moment with those of Mayence.

At last, on the 19th of October, Custine went in person to reconnoitre the bridges, gates, and outworks and intrenchments of the fortress. We saw him from our bivouac, attended by two engineer officers; they were at that time called miners. The enemy fired on them; and our light guns returned the fire, which brought on a general discharge from the ramparts; some hussars made a sortie from the Rhine Gate, but the general, being without an escort, galloped back to our lines; he had seen enough to know that it would not be as easy to attack Mayence as Spires, and that he would have to open trenches in the regular way.

Unfortunately the Prussians, who had been allowed by Dumouriez to evacuate Champagne quietly, instead of annihilating them as he might have done after the battle of Valmy, were approaching our rear; they had passed Sierck, and we saw the risk of being taken between two fires; we were, therefore, obliged to force our way into Mayence or to fall back; besides, we were but twenty thousand strong.

We were then in expectation that the signal would be given for the assault.

All this day was passed in going and coming. Colonel Houchard set out as bearer of a flag of truce the next day; he was a long time away, and returned about one. We said to ourselves, the time is coming, the attacking columns will form soon; we looked again; more flags

of truce were on the road. At six in the evening Custine, followed by his staff, rode by our bivouac; we were told that the grenadiers of Charente-Inférieure had called out, "To the assault!" and that he had replied, "Right, comrades, hold yourselves ready; the assault cannot be delayed, and you shall head it."

Cries of "Vive la République!" began, then another flag of truce left Mayence. Custine went to meet him, and led him to head-quarters without bandaging his eyes. All along the line the cries of "The assault, the assault!" never ceased. It was growing dark: we expected the attack would take place at daybreak. We had a single siege gun, and there was nothing else for it.

The morning of the 21st of October, there still being nothing new, indignation became general, when about nine the grenadiers of Charente-Inférieure were ordered to occupy the Rhine Gate. They started immediately; we expected to see them mown down by grape, but they reached the glacis without a single discharge; we saw their bayonets defiling along the zigzags of the outworks, and then we heard that Mayence had capitulated, and our grenadiers would mount quietly guard at the gate, giving the governor time to remove the military chest. You may believe we were quite satisfied, for notwithstanding our cries "To the assault!" we all looked at the rows of great guns which loured down upon us from their embrasures, the redoubts, and the lines of palisades. We knew if all these had to be carried three-fourths of us would never have seen home again; we were, therefore, extremely well pleased.

The next day the army made its entry into Mayence. The whole city came out to meet us.

These Mayence people did love us. Battalions,

squadrons, regiments of the line, with troops of students and burghers in the intervals, marched along, colours flying, and drums beating in front; they defiled under the old portcullises of the gate, singing the Marseillaise. On the Place d'Armes, after we had relieved the Austrian and Hessian sentries when they gave us billets for lodging, the burghers took us by the arm to their houses, treated us sumptuously, and then made us tell them about the revolution in the middle of their families.

Another thing pleased me much. As soon as we had our quarters assigned, our men filled the breweries of the old town, and drank jugs of beer to the health of all patriots whatever. Numbers of singers in jackets, breeches with bone buttons, and immense cocked hats, simple workpeople, and even peasants, got up and sang droll songs, inventing them as they sang. I especially remember one little shrivelled-up old man with eyes surrounded by wrinkles, and a red nose, who began to act the arrival of Colonel Houchard as bearer of a flag of truce; the fright of the baron when threatened with an assault, his cries, his indignation, the colonel's summons to surrender, the governor's answers, who lifted up his hands to heaven, stammering that he had his orders, and that he would let himself be cut in pieces rather than not carry them out.

It was all so natural that the Mayencers laughed till they cried.

But I must not fail to give you a copy of the two last letters which passed between Custine and Gimnich; they will show you what a farce it was, and must amuse you. Here they are, word for word:—

"*From General Custine to the Governor of Mayence.*

"*Headquarters at Marienborn,*

"*Oct.* 20, 1792, *the year* 1 *of the French Republic.*

"M. THE GOVERNOR,—My wish to avoid the effusion of blood is so great that I would willingly accede to your wish, and grant you until to morrow before you give me an answer; but, sir, the eagerness of my grenadiers is such I can no longer restrain them. All they look to is the glory of fighting the enemies of liberty, and the rich prey which must be the reward of their valour, for I must warn you that you must expect to be taken by storm. Not only is this possible, but it is without danger, for I am well acquainted with your fortress, and with the sort of troops who defend it. Spare, then, the blood of so many innocent victims, and of thousands of men. Our lives are nothing. Accustomed as we are to lavish them in battle, we know how to lose them without regret. I owe it to the glory of my Republic, which profits by the powerlessness of despots who tried to oppress her, and who sees them fly before the ensigns of liberty, not to fetter the ardour of my brave soldiers, and I could not if I would.

"Reply, reply, M. the Governor!

"*The French citizen, General in the Army,*

"CUSTINE."

"*Proposal of Capitulation made by the General commanding the Fortress of Mayence to General Custine.*

"*Mayence, October* 20, 1792.

"GENERAL,—If I were better known to you I am certain, general, that you would not have had recourse

threats to induce me to surrender to you the fortress I command. General, I am a soldier; you know the meaning of the word as well as I. I do not fear death in the execution of my duty, but the interest I feel in my fellow-citizens, and my desire to spare them the horrors of a bombardment, are my sole inducement, taking into consideration the full powers granted me by my sovereign, to surrender to you the town and fortress of Mayence on the following conditions:—

"1. The garrison of Mayence, and all auxiliary troops without exception, shall be at liberty to retire wherever it chooses with the honours of war, and also it shall have its choice of means of transporting its military chest, its artillery, personal effects, and baggage.

"2. The minister, and all persons in the service of his Electoral Highness, the superior and inferior clergy, shall have the power of removing themselves and their property. Every inhabitant of Mayence, absent or present, shall have the same privileges, and every citizen of Mayence shall retain his own property.

"3. Although my master is not at war with France, he is ready to take no part in it, hoping thereby that his property and possessions will be respected.

"4. When the above is signed all hostilities shall cease, and on both sides commissioners shall be appointed to regulate the evacuation, transport, and all that relates to it.

"I have the honour to be, general, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"Baron de Gimnich, *Governor of Mayence.*"

"The French citizen, general in the army, reserves the right that the troops occupying Mayence shall not

serve for a year against the Republic or its allies. The French general moreover reserves for his Republic the right of declaring by treaties on sovereign rights. As to individual property, it will doubtless be respected; it is so consonant with the principles of the French Republic that it is for the maintenance of this respect that the basis of the constitution has been laid. To-morrow, at nine in the morning, the Rhine Gate and the circuit around shall be put into the possession of two companies of French grenadiers; on these conditions and under these expressed reservations all hostilities shall cease, &c., &c."

Thus in about fifteen days we had obtained possession of all the magazines so ceaselessly talked about in the little gazettes belonging to the émigrés, three large towns and one of the principal fortresses in Germany. Events like these will astonish and delight all France; the Republic was everywhere successful, and people began to see that when they rise in the defence of justice, despots and their supporters are in a bad way.

CHAPTER VI.

ONCE in Mayence, we looked forward to resting ourselves for some days, and to fraternise with the inhabitants. We were lodged in the barracks, churches, and magazines of this patriotic city to be more at our ease; a few regiments of infantry and cavalry only were encamped near on both banks; our war commissioners also inspected the granaries, and took account of all stores of provision which would be useful in case of need.

But, as if everything went againt us at once, the next news we heard was that the Prussians, following the course of the Moselle, had halted at Coblentz, and were already in possession of the fortress about twenty leagues on our left. Our army was furious. Custine reproached Kellermann, who had been ordered to follow the Prussians by Dumouriez, for not pressing them on their retreat from Verdun to Coblentz; he did not hesitate to say so, and even denounced Kellermann to the Convention, declaring that every general who was to blame ought to be tried by court-martial.

I cannot say whether he was right or not, but I know that at the arrival of these bad news, instead of resting ourselves, we had to betake ourselves to pickaxe and shovel to work at the fortifications, construct redoubts facing Weissenau, Dalheim, Marienborn, and even on the other side of the Rhine, round the little town of Cassel; for before us Mayence had only a tête-de-pont on the right bank of the river. We first fortified that side with large stones, which came by water from a large ruined village called Gustavenbourg. At this point the river is more than a thousand yards across. It makes a fearful noise above the bridge of boats, dashing itself against the piles driven in to break the force of the current. Thousands of wheelbarrows were going up and down the bridge, and as the weather was as bad for the Prussians as for ourselves, we contented ourselves as well as we could in our disagreeable situation.

But the Parisian federals were furious with General Custine; they said they had enlisted to fight and not to dig. The truth is, these poor creatures were brave enough, but they had no strength whatever, and labour killed them; they died like flies. Of three battalions of federals, forming altogether about eighteen hundred men, in one year there were two hundred and fifty left—the result of bad air, bad food, and of all the sufferings incidental to a people in a city where no one thought of anything but court pleasures—what can they be expected to know?

I remember my sister Lisbeth, who was quartered with her battalion in the old church of St. Ignatius, said the Parisians were right, and I got angry because she wanted to make them believe that we never had

such hard work at Baraques. Thereupon I gave her a look, and said before the others—

"I remember, notwithstanding, Citoyenne Lisbeth, that in the days of the corvée we should have been glad to have had such excellent pickaxes to work with."

I was going on to put her in mind about begging on the roads, but she got in a rage, and screamed out—

"Hold your tongue! be off!"

And her husband, Sergeant Marescot, cut me short by saying that free men were right not to lower themselves by wheeling barrows, like galley-slaves. These are the people who make the worst aristocrats—ancient beggars who are ashamed to work! But I shall say no more on that subject; every man of good sense will think as he ought.

That same evening I was returning from Cassel with my battalion; we were passing over the bridge, covered with mud, and I had forgotten the morning's dispute, when, as we neared the jetty, we saw numerous troops en route to Oppenheim. There were two or three battalions of the Vosges, the ci-devant Durfort Dragoons, now become the 4th Chasseurs, some field-pieces, and in the rear the federals from the section of the Four Nations. They followed the course of the Rhine.

As we came out on the quay my sister's cart drove up among the federals, who laughed and called out, "Move on, move on!"

Lisbeth, seeing me go by covered with mud, with pick and shovel on my shoulder, said jeeringly—

"Well, you great fool, you see we get what we want by crying for it. While you are digging, we are going to levy requisitions, under Neuwinger, on the right bank."

I was just going to answer her, when Marescot came up and said, without noticing me—

"The cart is too full; throw out the empty boxes; we have not room enough, and we can put everything in the straw at the bottom."

I saw directly the rascal was thinking of nothing but plunder. Lisbeth jerked the reins, gave her horse a cut with the whip, and drove on; and I went on to our barracks in the Caputziner-strasse to dry and rest myself.

That evening, the 23rd of October, 1792, Houchard, with his Montmorency Dragoons, crossed the river at Cassel, and moved up the right bank of the Meiu as far as Hochheim, while Neuwinger, with fifteen hundred men, reached the bridge at Oppenheim to follow the left bank of the Mein. They thus could surprise Frankfort from both shores at the same time. Neuwinger having to make a detour, Houchard arrived there first; so we were told the next day, the 24th.

I could never understaud what we were there for except to force contributions, for we had nothing to do on the right bank of the Rhine. We were not at war with the German Empire, but solely with Prussia, Austria, and their allies; it was contrary to all justice to exact a ransom from people who had never done us any harm; it was also most impolitic, for this attack would oblige the Diet to declare against us, and bring the whole of Germany on our backs; but there is no putting a stop to plundering; the idea of taking what is not theirs to take is too strong.

So we heard that Houchard having appeared the first before the Bœkenheim Gate, the magistrates, in astonishment, sent to ask what the French wanted; and he

replied, "Refreshments;" but Neuwinger, when he came up on the other side, pointed his guns at the Sachsenhausen Gate and summoned the town to surrender; and the wealthy bankers, of whom this city is full, hurried to open the gates in order to avoid the worst. The French entered in triumph, and Neuwinger and Houchard took possession of the Hôtel de Ville, and in General Custine's name exacted a forced contribution of two million florins from the inhabitants of Frankfort, especially from the rich.

When we heard that, we all comprehended it was no longer a war of a free people claiming and defending the rights of man, but a war of despots for the purpose of robbing people and bringing them under our rule; and so the nation understood it. From that moment a mark was made against Custine by the Committee of Surveillance in Paris; they said he had excited the hatred of Germany against us; that he made us no better than robbers; and they were right. When a general causes marauders to be shot, he ought not to set them a bad example. Custine discovered this when it was too late.

The Prussians and Hessians crossed the Rhine at Coblentz and extended themselves along the Lahn, about ten or twelve leagues on the left of Frankfort; they took up good positions at Nassau, Dietz, and Limbourg, their plan being to fall upon the Mein between Frankfort and Mayence, and to cut up our army into separate fragments. We all saw this, for we had no lack of maps; all the officers and even the common soldiers used to say—

"That is what they intend to do."

Custine had made a Dutchman, Major Van Helden,

commandant at Frankfort. Houchard and Neuwinger had returned, leaving there a garrison of eighteen hundred men; but they did not bring the money resulting from the forced contributions back with them, for the Frankfort merchants had sent a deputation to the National Convention to protest against the plundering of their city.

This deputation of notables were instructed to represent that the Republic was not at war with the German Empire, but only with the King of Bohemia and Hungary, the King of Prussia, and the Elector of Hesse; that Frankfort, a free imperial city, had nothing to do with our affairs, and that we had enemies enough without bringing the German Diet upon us, for the sake of a wretched sum of money exacted most unjustly.

This was but common sense. Unfortunately, very few Frenchmen then knew how the matter stood; we had been brought up in ignorance, and we knew nothing about the state of our neighbours. All the Germans, Prussians, Austrians, Hessians, Bavarians, Saxons, Tyrolese, and even Hungarians, were but one people in our eyes. The only difference we could see in the Germans was the blue coats and the white coats, the yellow flag with the double-headed eagle, and the flag with the black eagle; the pointed shakos and the little sky-blue caps.

Towards the middle of November, 1792, Houchard and Meunier set out one evening with the cavalry and some battalions of volunteers for the bridge at Cassel. They were going to attack the Prussians at Limbourg. The enemy was surprised and routed; the hussars of liberty distinguished themselves in this affair; they made some prisoners and captured some cannon.

Brunswick retreated to Montabour. Meunier fortified himself in Kœnigstein with four hundred men in order to keep the enemy in observation, but the affair had no further result. Cold set in; the country was covered with white frost; even the Prussians and Hessians went into winter quarters in the villages near Ems, Kirberg, and farther still. We expected it to be the last skirmish for the year.

We had, however, made a grand mistake, for just then we heard of the invasion of Belgium by Dumouriez, the crowning victory at Jemappes, the taking of Mons, Tournay, Brussels, Ghent, and Antwerp—in fact, the conquest of the Low Countries as far as the Meuse.

Our battalion was then quartered in a large tumble-down, rotten building, which was called the Capucins' convent. There was a court where we were mustered, and small cells all alike round it, two large dormitories, a dining-hall, a magnificent kitchen, glazed galleries, and a small slated bell-tower. It was as old as the streets in Mayence; we were lodged three or four together in each cell, and we remained there till the bombardment began, when the old nest began to blaze like a truss of straw. When the drum was beaten in the old galleries we expected the old house to fall in; and even I feel pleasure in bringing to mind our great cocked hats and our blue and red uniforms going and coming in the ancient corridors, and the "Marseillaise" and the "Ca Ira," which used to make the panes in the windows rattle.

In the evening, when we returned from working at the redoubts, we used to assemble in the kitchen. There was no want of wood; we put whole logs on the fire at once; the flames roared in the great black chimney, and

we laughed, and dreamed, and told one another what we had heard.

There we received the news, and the bulletin from the National Convention was read. The first comer would get on a bench and call out, "Listen!"

Then he would begin to read, making this or that remark on each item of news. Some approved, others did not. At last they would all call out—

"Silence! Listen! What would you have? Let every one think as he likes!"

You must know that the Convention, after proclaiming the Republic, had immediately split into three factions, that of the Montagne, the Gironde, and the Marais. The Montagnards wished for a Republic one and indivisible, equality of rights for all, and the destruction of everything that remained of the old order of things. In the first place they desired equality, and naturally relied upon the people, who cared for that much more than for liberty, having suffered so cruelly for so many ages from the inequality existing in France before '89; besides, equality is but justice.

The Girondins—I here mean the Republicans from the Gironde, for many Royalists were to be found among this party who had only changed their cockade, while they waited for an opportunity to betray the Republic—the true Girondins put liberty above everything. They were the representatives of the great middle class, the great shipowning interest, large manufacturers, all sorts of wealth, in fact, and they desired a Republic where the bourgeois would be everything. And as the populace of Paris was very much in their way, as it had pushed forward the constituent and legislative assemblies every time these latter attempted to draw back, their aim was

to transfer the Convention to some province, either to Bourges or elsewhere, to be rid of the people who supported the Montagnards, and to cause a government to suit them to be voted by a majority devoted to them.

Those who were called the men of the Marais, numbering three or four hundred, formed the centre of the Assembly, nearly all true Republicans; but the numerous gazettes in the pay of the Gironde never ceased exciting the jealousy of the departments against Paris, and had represented the Parisians as robbers, and the Montagnards as leaders of banditti. It must also be confessed that the September massacres had also terrified them, which was very natural. So these people were afraid, and while they distrusted the Girondins, among whom they knew there were many former Royalists, they, nevertheless, voted with them against the Montagnards.

You see, with such different ways of thinking, the Montagne and the Gironde could never come to terms; the more so that circumstances were not so clear as they are now I am telling you about them. The cleverest among them made mistakes; and from having been so often betrayed, one saw a traitor everywhere. So they continued to dispute, one day on one subject, another about something else. The Girondins accused the Montagnards of having caused the September massacres, of aiming at a dictatorship, and of driving the revolution to extremes, in order to disgust the nation with it, and to put Philippe-Égalité on the throne; the Montagnards said the Girondins wanted to divide France into a number of small Republics, and to pave the way to a civil war by exciting the provinces against

Paris, and to conspire with the Royalists for the re-establishment of the ancient monarchy. At last, as it always happens when distrust and anger preponderate, both parties were led into too great extremes.

Three-fourths of these accusations were utterly unfounded, but we know now that such was public belief; and the gazettes put them in circulation all over the country; it caused frightful disputes even in very small villages.

In our capucins' nest we wrangled to such an extent that the old shed echoed.

One circumstance more I well remember—that is, our astonishment when the news arrived from Belgium.

Until then we had been the first Republican conquerors; we had taken Spires, Worms, Mayence, and Frankfort; and when the gazettes mentioned us with enthusiasm, and called us the victorious army of Mayence, we thought it very natural; nothing was too fine for us. But when these same gazettes began to talk of nothing else but Dumouriez, Beurnonville, Valence, and Philippe-Égalité, of the famous battle of Jemappes, of the brilliant actions of Chamboran, Berchigny, &c., of guns and colours taken, and of cities surrendered, why then that irritated us excessively; we wanted to attack the Prussians once more, in order to regain our prestige. All the old veterans in the battalion said we were left to rot; many more said Dumouriez had allowed the Prussians and Hessians to fall on our rear in order to carry out his plans with regard to Belgium; he was an aristocrat and a schemer, &c.

For my part I can only say that this great body of Prussians, who had been allowed to escape instead of being exterminated in Champagne, were then encamped

a few leagues distant, and they were then more than fifty thousand strong, in the neighbourhood along the Rhine. Dumouriez had done what other generals do, he had got rid of one part of the enemy to master the others; in doing so he had left the greater part of the burden on our shoulders. So that when the conquerors of the Austrians in Belgium began to rest on their laurels, our campaign became so much the more onerous, and we risked not only losing Frankfort, but also of being blockaded in Mayence.

The last fortnight in November they made nearly all of us leave Mayence and cross the Rhine at Cassel; there only remained between three and four thousand men to garrison the fortress, and all the rest of the army was spread along the Rhine. We encamped by Costheim, Weilbach, Heidersheim, Hœchst, and Sassenheim; our main body lay at Hœchst. The mountain battalion, with the 2nd and 3rd battalion of the Vosges, were bivouacked in advance of the level ground at Bockenheim, behind a large wood.

We could see Frankfort a couple of leagues below us on our right, with its gardens, its long avenues of poplars, its green and red cottages stretching away in the distance, its ditches full of water, its churches, its wide streets, the Mein covered with boats, and on the other bank a repetition of large gardens, fountains, and arbours.

What wealth is contained in such a city! how every one comes and goes, and works to make money! what an existence! And then to think that a handful of soldiers, led by a marauder, could disturb the labours of so many industrious people! They resembled hornets who force their way into a hive to devour the honey

and destroy everything; but Custine had no foresight—he was only a general.

But in this vine-growing country we were encamped up in the hills, and I recollect Jean Rat saying we should make a descent upon Frankfort and help ourselves to what we wanted.

It was also reported the Prussians were about to attack us, and I then saw very large abattis of felled timber constructed to cover our line. The battalions in advance were not obliged to handle pick and shovel; we were doing duty as sentinels to give the army notice if anything was seen, and to defend ourselves until reinforced; but in our rear, along a line extending three or four leagues, between Hœchst, Sassenheim, and Soulzbach, we could see the gleam of thousands of axes and picks, forests and orchards fall, heaps of yellow earth rise and extend from one height and another, across ravines and vales; we could see carts and wheelbarrows going up and down the slopes; officers on horseback encouraging their men; small field-pieces drawn by five or six horses struggling up the intrenchment through the soft ground, and then take their places in the works; and in spite of the distance we could hear the sound of thousands of men at work; it was a distant confused noise which never seemed to end.

This lasted nine days.

We did not follow the example of the Prussians who were in cantonment at Limbourg, and who had been surprised by Houchard in the villages; we slept under tents. In war time we must keep our eyes open; if you study your own ease you will fall asleep. It is better to suffer cold and keep well awake.

This, then, was the state of affairs, when, on the 29th of November, in the morning, while we were making our soup, all of a sudden against the sky on our right long blue lines showed themselves on all the roads and footpaths leading to Frankfort; these lines were still three leagues away, but in our battalion all the old soldiers who had joined as volunteers, and who knew what it meant, said—

"There's the enemy!"

Some of them went forward to reconnoitre the cavalry, and explained to us what were those lines which did not seem to be moving, but which were always slowly advancing.

About two we saw them already reaching from Hombourg to Oberwesel on the opposite side of the mountain; the gleaming of bayonets and shining of helmets at the same time let us know they were from forty to fifty thousand strong, but no one had any idea that King Frederick William and the Duke of Brunswick, who had escaped from the Argonne, thanks to Dumouriez, were there in person to have their revenge; we only knew it afterwards.

Custine at that moment was in Mayence; Houchard, in the vicinity of Hœchst, near the Mein, commanded the camp; our commandant Meunier was at Kœnigstein; our senior captain, Jordy d'Abreschwiller, sent directly to give Houchard notice of what was going on. I see him now riding up with the colonel of engineers, Guy-Vernon, and two or three young staff officers; they galloped through the village and advanced as far as the edge of the level opposite Bergen; there were all the veterans of the 1st Mountain Battalion and those of the Vosges assembled, with half the peasants from

Bockenheim, watching the enemy's motions. Houchard, the engineer colonel, and others looked on in silence; one of the young officers said—

"They are concentrating themselves on Bergen."

And Houchard replied—

"Yes, they are the white coats; we shall have something to do to-morrow."

At the same time he turned to Jordy, and said—

"You will take note of all their movements, captain, and let me know every hour what they are."

Then off he galloped, the others after him; and all the 29th we saw nothing more; the enemy continued marching in the same direction; the white coats came to a junction with the blue ones on a long mountain above Frankfort.

That night thousands of bivouac fires round Bergen lighted up the dark sky; nothing stirred, the Prussians were taking their rest; but innumerable lights were moving about the town, across the gardens, and along the Mein. About three in the morning, while I was standing sentry, noticing this agitation in Frankfort, while all was still, I reflected that we ought not to trust the Germans, that they all held together against us, and that something was hatching. We were masters of the town, it is true, we had two thousand men in garrison in the place, and of course the posts were doubled; but two thousand men could not defend such an extent of old ramparts, especially if the burghers and the people sided with the enemy. Nor could our small army of from fifteen to twenty thousand men offer battle to fifty thousand; we must be reinforced. These ideas and many others occurred to me then.

Nevertheless all was quiet during the night, only

the next day, between nine and ten, the alarm in Frankfort began to ring; muskets were discharged about the streets, which soon grew into regular firing; everthing was in a revolution. This was what the Prussians were expecting; while the people and the garrison were fighting they marched down to be let into the town. We wanted to go and assist our comrades, but we dared not leave our posts unguarded without the chance of being cut off. A rolling fire was kept up in the town; and working men, principally weavers, braziers, carpenters, shoemakers, and tailors, all the guilds of workmen in fact, instigated by the burghers, who remained quietly at home, and numbers of vine-dressers from Nassau, were giving battle to our volunteers.

About midday several cannon-shot gave us notice that the Prussians at the foot of the glacis were under the fire of the fortress, and that Van Helden was actively defending himself. But what could he do when a people will not put up with you, but rise against you en masse? and how could he defend all these gardens studded with sheds, and cottages, and palisades, and hedges which ran down to the ditches, and which covered the enemy's approach? What could two thousand men do against a hundred thousand? A few years later we would have set fire to the place to give the burghers something to think about, but that was not yet the fashion, we had still a little humanity left; all France had cried out against Jarry when he burned a village in Belgium.

At last, while we were watching this unpleasant scene at a distance, without exactly knowing what was going on, listening to the firing, the cannon-shot, and

the alarm bell, and furious at being kept in our positions, about two a column of seven or eight thousand Prussians marched down from Bergen, and advanced at the double in our direction; they marched in a column of attack by demi-battalions.

Captain Jordy and the commandants of the 2nd and 3rd Vosges battalions immediately formed us in three lines a little in the rear of the slope, to keep us under cover, with our six light field-pieces in the intervals. In this position we awaited them. The enemy advanced in good order, their colours with the black eagle in the centre of each line, and just as they reached the bottom of the valley a staff officer galloped up with orders for us to evacuate our position.

Imagine our indignation at turning our backs to the Prussians; but the order was clear, and without loss of time we descended by files towards Hœchst, taking with us our guns, which had not fired a single shot.

At last we were on our march, and already clear of the village, seeing a Prussian column getting between our position and Frankfort, to cut off the retreat of the garrison on the high road to Griesheim, which runs along the bank of the Mein, when another staff officer met us half-way up the hill, and gave us the order to retake Bockenheim, which the Prussians had just reached, and were preparing to open fire on our rear. All the same the order to return gave great satisfaction, the more so that two battalions of grenadiers arrived to support our attack.

So we climbed the hill again, and the Prussians were so surprised to see us come at them again with the bayonet, yelling like wolves, "Vive la République!" that they allowed us to repulse them to the bottom of

the hill and massacre three or four hundred of them in the village. The grenadiers arrived at the same time with two guns, which they put in position on the edge of the level, with us behind them to support them, and the Prussian column which was defiling between Bockenheim and Frankfort, believing it had nothing to fear from us, since we had evacuated the village—this column was cut up by grape so terribly, that it broke among the gardens, leaving hundreds of dead and wounded along the road.

Neuwinger came up at this moment with nine thousand men to the relief of the garrison; he deployed in front of the glacis, and the Prussians were taken between two fires—that shows what a game of chance is war. The first order we had received to evacuate the village came from Houchard; and Custine, coming up at a gallop from Mayence, directly ordered us to retake it. If we had remained where we were, the Prussians would not have dared to get between our position and Frankfort, leaving us to fire on their rear, which is quite evident; they lost in that affair twelve or fifteen hundred men through chances being against them.

Unfortunately Neuwinger came too late to save the garrison; the people of Frankfort had opened the gates to the enemy; two battalions, surrounded by workmen, peasants, Prussians, and Austrians, had laid down their arms; two others had cut their way through, led by Major Van Helden in person as far as the glacis. These two battalions having joined Neuwinger retreated along the Mein, and all the posts on the neighbouring heights fell back accordingly. Houchard himself, with a squadron of his hussars, came to lead us back. He was a brave soldier, but he did not always know what

he was about; to give an order it was necessary for him to see things with his own eyes; what he did not see he did not think of, or if he did, not until it was too late. This was the cause of his misfortunes.

Once in retreat and the Prussians in Frankfort, all our works along the Mein were turned; we had to make haste and abandon them. About five in the evening we took up our position between Sassenheim and Soulzbach. The Prussians followed us; our rear-guard skirmished. We placed eight guns in battery in front of the village of Rœdelheim, and the enemy, who expected to drive us under the walls of Mayence, when he came up was received by several discharges of grape which made them give over pressing us too closely.

We remained in position the whole of the night, expecting an action. Custine, Biron, Beauharnais, and Houchard met and consulted till morning in a large tricolour tent where a fire was lighted. But the next day, as the Prussians did not offer battle, we returned to Mayence.

In the two battalions which had escaped out of Frankfort were Marescot and my sister Lisbeth; they had lost horse, cart, and all their plunder, and fortunate to have escaped from the disaster safe and sound.

Custine, who took all the credit to himself when everything went well, and laid all mishaps at others' doors, had the Commandant Van Helden tried by court-martial, and this brave fellow, who had fought like a lion, was broke.

Such was the end of our taking of Frankfort; and now other events must have their turn.

CHAPTER VII.

SNOW fell on the day we re-entered Mayence; both sides of the river, the bridge of boats, the ramparts, and the roofs of the solemn-looking old town were white as far as the eye could reach; battalions, squadrons, artillery, and baggage filed silently by and returned to their quarters. Some regiments remained on the other side, at Costheim and the neighbourhood. Meunier, with five or six hundred men, was blockaded in Kœnigstein by the Prussians, about five or six leagues distant from us. The year 1792 ended unfavourably for us.

We were then obliged to set to work again at the fortifications in terribly cold weather. If the nobility had only been obliged to work as hard as we were they would all have died, but we were peasants, lightermen, workmen, wood-cutters—men hardened by labour, and who were not afraid of blistering their hands nor of getting chilblains on their feet.

It was in the beginning of January that the Convention sent its representatives Rewbel, Haussmann, and

Merlin de Thionville to keep up our spirits; they were constantly with us in the earthworks, with their large hats with the brims looped up, their scarves and sabres dragging behind them, and calling out to us—

"Courage, citizens, you are getting on!"

And in spite of the tears which the cold brought into our eyes, we used to say in reply—

"Vive la République!"

The Germans have always taken things easily. I remember one day our three representatives profited by the snow to beat up their quarters at Hochheim with eight battalions of volunteers. Towards evening the cannon roared on the hill-side; the Prussians had been surprised in their cantonments; files of prisoners were arriving all night. But the next day, the weather being as bad as ever, the Prussians surrounded Hochheim in force, and four representatives, with their eight battalions, just escaped being taken.

They were obliged to cut their way through at all hazards, and we there lost several guns and some hundreds of men.

So passed the winter months. In the evening we dried our clothes and read the Convention's bulletins; they spoke of the endless struggles between the Montagne and the Gironde. About this time mention was made of a hiding-place full of papers which had just been discovered in the Tuileries; the newspapers called it "the iron chest."

A locksmith named Gamin had assisted Louis XVI. to make this chest, for in his leisure moments the king worked at lock-making. This man being taken ill took it into his head that the king had poisoned him to prevent his betraying the secret of the hiding-place, and

lost no time in informing the minister Roland, out of revenge, before he died. This affair caused a great sensation at the time.

I often went to see my sister and Marescot at the church of St. Ignatius, and there in that ancient edifice I wondered at the excited Parisians. These extraordinary, violent characters could not contain themselves when the bulletins arrived; they clambered up on the tables, and three or four of them would begin making speeches at once, moving resolutions and passing them to impeach Roland; they accused the minister of having burnt all the papers found in the iron chest which tended to compromise the Girondins. Sometimes when the news which arrived pleased them they would begin and dance the carmagnole, and oftentimes the whole city workpeople, burghers, and volunteers were in this state.

I well remember in what an extraordinary state of excitement every one was when we learned that ci-devant King Louis XVI. was at last to be put on his trial. For a very long time petitions had been sent up demanding that he should be tried, but then one would have believed that such a thing as bringing that man to judgment had never been contemplated.

I have seen many trials in the course of time—trials of bandits, of poisoners, that of Schinderhans, and of Fualdès, and of Dr. Castaing; it is extraordinary how curious people are to see such horrors; they want to know everything—the appearance of the wretches, their lives, the questions and answers; they cannot wait for the papers, and never did the life of an honest man, his good speaking, or good looks, produce one quarter the effect.

Well, all such curiosity was nothing compared with that which men showed about the trial of the ci-devant King of France, whom they called Louis Capet. In the breweries, in the pot-houses, in the guard-rooms and the barracks, they talked of nothing else. Some said he ought to be shot without trial, as an enemy of the Republic and of the human race; others that he and his family ought only to be banished; others, again, that he ought to be guillotined for having been a traitor to his country; disputes were the natural results of these discussions; all over France and in the army Girondins were to be found, as also Montagnards and men of the Marais, to say nothing of the relations and friends of the émigrés and refractory priests; men of Chauvel's stamp had not yet got the upper hand. Just imagine what a medley.

But in the Convention the battle was terrible indeed. After doing all they could to stifle the trial, the Girondins, finding they could no longer prevent it, invented every day something new to retard it and stop its progress. One day they asserted that the king was inviolable according to the constitution of '91. The reply was that he had violated that constitution. They next declared that it was an abomination, the Convention was not a tribunal, and when they were beaten on that point also, they demanded an appeal to the people; they tried to frighten the nation by asserting that the death of Louis would be the signal of a coalition of all the monarchs in Europe against France, &c. I cannot call to mind what they did not say; there was no end to it. Sometimes they came down from their seats by hundreds, like so many furies, to attack the Montagnards, and had it not been for the calmer men of the

Marais the whole thing would have ended in a massacre.

The king had, without doubt, been a traitor to the nation; the documents found in the iron chest proved it beyond dispute; he had spent half his civil list in corrupting deputies, paying the Coblentz émigrés; he had invited the Prussians and Austrians into France to re-establish himself on his throne, his nobility and clergy in their ancient privileges, and us in our ancient slavery.

If it had been question of some poor devil who had committed one-fourth of the same crimes, his trial would not have lasted ten minutes; but this was a king! and in his defence the Girondins, who called themselves Republicans, ran the risk of kindling a civil war in France, for they proposed to cause Louis XVI. to be tried by the primary assemblies—that is to say, to excite the same discussions and disturbance all over the country as they had done in the Convention.

All this time the scarcity increased, the price of bread rose daily; the workmen were paid in assignats, which were only at a fourth of their nominal value; the shopkeepers refused to take these assignats in payment for their goods; one was obliged to wait hours at the bakers' doors for a loaf of bread; in fact, the people—whose fathers, brothers, and children were fighting in Germany and Belgium because the Girondins had caused war to be declared—the people were dying of hunger! They called on the Convention to save them, to fix the price of necessaries, but the Girondins would not listen to the cries of these miserable people—all their pity was for Louis XVI.

These things occurred about the end of December and

the beginning of January. Fifteen days before there was a report that Beurnonville, who had replaced Kellermann in the command of the army of the Moselle, was coming to join us and crush the enemy; but he could not get beyond Sarrebruck, for the Prussians had moved in force upon Pellugen and Bibeltausen to defend the passes; the fourth battalion of the Meurthe and the Free Company of St. Maurice distinguished themselves in this action; mention was also made of the behaviour of the Popincourt battalion, and of the 96th infantry. After this action, the Austrian dragoons of Tuscany and the Grèvenmakers remained masters between the Sarre and the Rhine; the Prussians had thrown bridges across at Baccarach and in several other places, and our hussars of liberty often exchanged blows with their partisans when escorting the convoys which came to us from Landau, Wissembourg, and elsewhere.

I had written to Margaret, telling her what sort of a life we were leading in mud, rain, and snow, and, as I had no answer, I concluded the letters had been surprised by the enemy, for we often heard of such an occurrence, and those who were thinking about the ci-devant Louis XVI.'s trial did not receive their gazettes more regularly either. Such I supposed was the case, when one morning, on coming off duty, I saw a man in a blouse standing on the stairs of the barracks, and I heard old Sôme call to me from the landing—

"Here, Michel, here is some one asking for you."

I looked, and saw Quentin Murot, the courier between Phalsbourg and Sarreguemines, who at that time lived at Porte d'Allemagne. You will believe how glad I was to see a fellow-countryman at such

a time. I could have kissed him for joy, and I called out—

"Can that be you, Father Murot? Are you come from home now?"

"Am I? I should think so, since I have brought something for you with me, but I left it at the Sun Inn; I have left my cart there. I could not carry the basket about with me without knowing where I should find you."

"Have you seen Margaret?"

"Yes; it is just a week since I saw her in the shop with your little brother Stephen. She begged so hard, I could not do otherwise than take charge of the basket. Wait a moment," said he, putting his hand inside his blouse; "I have a letter for you somewhere."

And out of his carrier's pocket-book he produced the letter, which I saw directly was in Margaret's handwriting. My heart overflowed with joy. All my comrades who were standing by looked at me. I wanted to read it when I was by myself, so, in spite of my impatience, I put it in my pocket, and said—

"Thanks, Father Murot, thanks; and now let us go and look after the basket."

We went away together, and all along the streets I kept asking him news of Margaret and Maître Jean, of my father, and others, always going back to know if Margaret was looking well, if she was always cheerful, and about my father's health. Murot had hardly time to answer all my questions. We passed numbers of people in the narrow streets—I saw no one but him. Each time he replied that they were all well in health, Margaret looks well and happy, and so does Maître Jean; he is as fat as ever, and still wears his long hussar's mous-

taches. I cried in return, "Ah, ah, that's well!" I fancied I could smell home again; and, looking affectionately at old Quentin Murot, notwithstanding the large wart by the side of his nose, and the wrinkles round his little eyes, fringed with yellow lashes, I thought him quite handsome.

But when we reached the old street where they say the man who invented printing was born, I was surprised to see a number of people in blouses and cotton caps, in cocked hats and red waistcoats, going and coming among a confusion of carts. They were calling one another by the name of their native place, such as Sarrebourg, Saverne, Quatre-Vents, Mittelbronn, and from our neighbourhood.

"So," said I to Murot, "you have not come to Mayence alone?"

"No," replied he, "there are more than a hundred and fifty of us; we were put in requisition to bring up cannon, powder, and balls. My boy Baptiste acts as courier now; I have taken his place. It seems you were blockaded here."

"Were you not attacked on the road?"

He began to laugh, and said—

"The National Guard of Phalsbourg escorted us as far as Rohrbach, and there two hundred national dragoons came from St. Avold to take charge of us. The three first days all went well, but between Landau and Frankenthal, in the afternoon of the fourth day, we had an alarm. We were advancing in file, without suspecting anything, our dragoons on the right and left of the road, when a dozen of them, who were ahead, came back and told us that a number of red cloaks were about to attack us, and as we were called to a halt

they came down the hill opposite in fur caps, with very long lances."

"Were you not frightened, Father Murot?"

"Frightened," cried he; "nonsense, you are joking, Michel; our dragoons rode forward to meet them, and they then had a fight together in the bottom; we looked on from the road. All of a sudden about ten of these rascals came down on us, having made a detour up the valley while the others were fighting; they came upon us full gallop, calling to us in their villainous German to upset the carts. I was fifth or sixth in the line; the leaders had run away, and one of the red cloaks, a tall, dark fellow, rushed upon me, put a pistol to my head, and ordered me to take the horses out.

"But I just put his arm on one side, and with the butt-end of my whip I gave him such a blow on his ear that the hair of his whiskers remained sticking to the handle, and all his double teeth on the left side were knocked down his throat; he could not see before him, and rolled about on his horse with his reins loose and his feet out of his stirrups. But two others who saw what I had done charged down on me with their long poles, and I had but just time to slip between the carts on the other side. Tall Mâcri, of Trois-Maisons, suffered for me, for one of the red cloaks drove his lance through his ribs and threw him down; and Nicolas Finck, who went to his assistance, had two slashes across the nose and cheek. I escaped unhurt, for our dragoons returned and the bandits drew off, leaving fifteen of them on the ground; we even had extra horses to continue our journey with in consequence."

Old Murot laughed heartily as he told me this story.

"And Louis XVI.'s trial," said I, "do they say much about it at home?"

"Capet's trial? Yes," said he, "the women are always talking about it; my wife wanted to burn some candles before the altar in his behalf; but I gave her a bit of my mind. The refractory priest of Henridorff preaches that a legion of angels will come down from heaven to comfort him; and every time the gendarmes come to arrest this rascal, a man who stands sentry in the bell-tower gives him notice and he escapes; one ought to set fire to his hole. I saw your mother last Sunday going to Henridorff; she has become quite white from fretting about Marie-Antoinette, who does not care the least about her or any one else.

"All that, Michel, do you see, is really nonsense. We peasants near the town, all we think about is Citizen Cambon, who is cutting the émigrés' estates into small lots, that every one may be able to buy a part, and who gives us credit besides. Now that is a man I respect. Let the aristocrats come and claim our lands again when we have once paid for them, all the peasants in France will fall on them by millions—not one of these do-nothing fellows would be left. Good heavens! if I had only known beforehand what was coming, what a number of bottles and pints I would have economised which I have drunk in the taps of public-houses and wine-shops for the last thirty-seven years, and which I could have turned into meadows, woods, and good land; however, it is done, and there is no more to be said, but let it serve as a warning to our children—what is drunk and swallowed is gone for good.

"As to Capet, they may cut off his head, or send him away between two gendarmes, it is all the same to me,

provided my wife does not spend the money I earn in causing masses to be said for him. But I keep my eyes open, never fear, and so do others too. For hundreds of years the aristocrats have had possession of the land, and we miserable peasants have been obliged to be satisfied with the kingdom of heaven; now it is our turn."

We were then just entering at the door of the inn, and the good man said to me—

"Here we are, Michel; wait till I get under the awning of the cart; your basket is at the farther end."

He clambered into the cart, and two minutes later he held out a basket, saying—

"Here it is."

It was a basket my father had plaited for me, exactly similar to one I had sent to Paris, Rue Bouloi, No. 1, two years before, but rather smaller. As I held it in my hands I thought of the happy days gone by, and I felt choked.

"What have I to give you, Father Murot?" said I at last.

"Oh, nothing," said he—"nothing; a bottle of wine if you like, Michel."

We went into the inn and called for a bottle of wine. The hall was full of people. I saw Nicolas Finck there near the stove. A large bandage stained with blood was tied across his face, and his fur cap on the top of it; he seemed rather tired, and went to sleep. I sat down in a corner near the door opposite Murot, and I began to read Margaret's letter.

Ah! all men have had the happiness of being loved once in their lives; but to be loved by a sensible woman, who thinks of something else besides constantly telling

you she loves you, who takes thought for your wants, and gives you courage by giving you good advice, forgets nothing that would please you—these are things you would not forget in ninety years, and which make you feel proud of inspiring such love, for that is a prize even more difficult to draw than the great prize in the lottery. In the basket Margaret had sent me two new shirts, woollen stockings to keep my feet warm; she had even lined the soles with felt, which keeps out the damp. She also sent me a flannel shirt, strong shoes studded with nails—in fact, all a man would want when he is obliged to live in mud, and be glad to warm himself in a hurry after he has done his work—what good sense and quickness she must have had to think of everything! There were other things besides—a good ham, a smoked quarter of bacon, and a bottle of kirsch. How I admired everything, and of course I made a vow to take care of myself for the sake of a woman with so much sense and such a good heart: yes, I made up my mind to do this, without, of course, failing in my duty either to my country or liberty.

Margaret's letter contained one from Chauvel, which, I am sorry to say, I have lost, for it gave an explanation of many circumstances, and foretold clearly what would happen to us later. It was addressed to Maître Jean, des Baraques du Bois-de-Chênes, and was dated, if I mistake not, 1st December, 1792.

Chauvel gave in this letter many details respecting the chiefs of the Montagne, and particularly Danton, whom he preferred to all the others for his courage, natural eloquence, good sense, and good heart. He said this brave man, after every battle in the Convention, was the first to offer his hand to the Girondins,

and implore them, in their country's name, to forget their animosities and join the Montagne in the interest of the Republic; but the Girondist party, in which the greatest orators were, was led by Madame Roland, an ambitious woman who could not endure Danton.

He told us if the Girondins persisted in controverting every measure necessary for the safety of the country, they must, sooner or later, come to blows, which would be the cause of great misfortunes, for a certain number of departments in the South would support their deputies, and the refractory priests and the nobles in La Vendée would surely profit by the opportunity to begin a civil war, and then the danger of the Republic would drive us to extreme measures.

He was quite right. From the day of Louis XVI.'s trial we could easily see what they were aiming at. No man of any sense would be deceived for a moment.

Well, these two letters gave me very great pleasure. After paying for the bottle of wine, and telling Murot to kiss Margaret for me on both cheeks, as well as my father and little Stephen, I walked gaily back to barracks in the Capuziner-strasse with my basket on my shoulder.

The next day, the 22nd of January, we heard by special messengers that the king was condemned to death, and two or three days after, his execution, in spite of the Girondins, who, up to the last moment, wanted a reprieve; however, they nearly all voted for death.

This news excited the greatest enthusiasm in the army. We were glad to see that at last justice had become the same for all, and that a king could no longer break his oath and betray his country with impunity. But at the same time we were well aware

that the kings of Europe would bear us a terrible grudge for the bad example we had set their subjects. These men, accustomed to look on mankind as beasts of burden, and themselves as gods, could never forgive us for showing that it was possible to cut off their heads as easily as those of other robbers; they foresaw that it was war to the death between them and the Republic, and that it must be put down.

For all that France was delighted, and during the succeeding fortnight numbers of addresses, with millions of signatures attached, were sent up to the Convention to thank it for what it had done.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING the month of February convoys of corn, straw, and especially of cannon, powder, and ball, were continually arriving; mills built upon piles in the middle of the river were ceaselessly at work; flour accumulated in the magazines, and everything demonstrated we should be besieged.

The first of the month the Girondin Brissot came and proposed to the Convention that war should be declared against England and Holland, saying the English nation was only awaiting such a declaration from us to put down its aristocracy and proclaim a Republic; that he had received this news from London, and that he would answer for the truth of it.

The truth is that the minister Pitt had caused this false information to be given to Brissot by soi-disant Republicans. Pitt wished for a war with France to check the progress of our revolutionary ideas, and to add strength to his own aristocracy; he would have attacked us long ago but for his dread of causing an opposition to his policy; but by deceiving Brissot, and

thus causing war to be declared against himself, he played his part well, for England was bound to defend his proceedings.

When I think of Brissot I get furious; by dint of bawling in the Legislative Assembly against Robespierre, who supported peace; by caballing, he and his friends, and exciting men's minds by means of their villainous gazettes, they had made us declare war against Germany when we were not in any way prepared for such a step. This war had provoked the invasion of Champagne and the massacres of September. It is true since then we had been successful. But we had been necessitated to declare the country in danger, to raise, arm, and equip hundreds of thousands of men, and expend millions of money. What is spent in fighting flies away in smoke; commerce, industry, and cultivation of the land all languish for want of men and money. We saw such would be the case then. No one earned anything; they were unable to buy any more émigrés' estates; the assignats which represented the value of the said estates fell in value accordingly; it was necessary to put great quantities of them in circulation, and the more that were issued the lower they fell—in fact, distress was general everywhere.

All these circumstances ought to have made our representatives reflect before bringing a fresh enemy against us.

But the Convention, deceived by Brissot, and perhaps stimulated by our victories in Belgium and Germany, declared war against England and Holland. Then, being well aware that Pitt would do his uttermost to return us all the evil we had done to England during the

American war, it decreed a levy of three hundred thousand men, and the division of all our forces into eight armies—three in the north, one in the Alps, one in the Var, one to guard the Pyrenees, one on the coast of the Channel, the eighth, called the reserve, at Châlons.

The Convention also decreed the reorganisation of the army according to the report of Dubois-Crancé This decree, which was read in the order of the day to every battalion, said that in future there should be no difference or distinction between the infantry corps, called the line, and the national volunteers; the infantry in the Republic's pay should be formed in demi-brigades, each consisting of one battalion of the ci-devant line regiments and two battalions of volunteers; each demi-brigade would therefore consist of three battalions, each battalion of nine companies—one of grenadiers and eight fusiliers; a grenadier company should consist of sixty-two men, officers, non-commissioned officers, corporals, and drummers included, and the fusilier companies of sixty-seven men; the uniform should be the same for the whole infantry; it should be of the national colours, and this change should be introduced by degrees as the Ministry of War found itself obliged to supply fresh clothing; each demi-brigade should be distinguished by a number on the colours and on the button; it should have six four-pounder field-pieces, with a company of gunners for the service of such pieces; in all ranks, except that of chef-de-brigade and corporal, promotion should take place in two ways—that is, a third by length of service to equality of rank going through the entire half-brigade, and two thirds by selection on the presentation

of three candidates proposed by the soldiers for every step vacant. The employments of general of brigade, general of division, to be conferred, one third according to length of service, and two thirds at the choice of the Minister of War, subject to the approval of the legislative body.

I give you all these details because the famous demi-brigades of the Republic, all formed on the same plan, in the years 1793 and 1794, are those which won for us so many rich provinces, which the imperial regiments have since unfortunately lost. Therefore it is my humble opinion, if we still intend to win provinces instead of losing them, we should do well to return to the immortal demi-brigades, the old soldiers of which became later marshals of the Empire and cantinières its princesses.

This decree did much good; one hardly ever heard of duels between old soldiers of the line and volunteers; these were enthusiastic for liberty, and those were used to discipline; the Republican armies became in consequence more steadfast and more enterprising.

Towards the beginning of March our brave commandant Meunier and his two hundred brave grenadiers returned from Kœnigstein, one of those sparrow-hawks' nests of which there are scores among the rocks which border the Rhine. I see them now crossing the bridge, thin, half-starved, their eyes as sharp as rats', their colours in rags, and eight small field-pieces which they brought with them. They had marched out with all the honours of war after a siege of three months. We called out—

"Hurrah for Commandant Meunier and the Kœnigstein Grenadiers!"

They laughed, showing their sharp teeth under their moustaches, and shaking hands with their comrades.

A fortnight after Meunier was raised to the rank of general, and the Convention decreed that the defenders of Kœnigstein deserved well of their country.

Our army was then occupying all the country between the Nahe and the Rhine, from Bingen to Spires; its magazines were at Frankenthal, a little above Worms. We were from forty to forty-five thousand strong.

Since our retreat from Frankfort the enemy had divided into three bodies. The first, principally composed of Saxons, was blockading Cassel; the second, consisting of about fifty thousand Prussians and Hessians, had passed the Rhine at Rheinfelz, some leagues below Bingen; it held all the country between the Nahe and the Moselle, on our left; and the third, of thirty-five thousand Austrians, commanded by General Wurmser, had ascended the Rhine as far as Mannheim, and threatened our right.

The Austrian plan was to pass the river in our rear while the Prussians attacked our left, and to cut off the road to Landau. Thus our whole army would have been shut up in Mayence; but General Meunier, posted at Spires with twelve thousand men, was watching their movements.

Things were as I have just described them, when one morning it was reported in Mayence that the Prussians were attacking our left wing, and that we were going out to repulse them. Then began the cries of "Vive la République!" and our battalion, the four Parisian federals, the Languedoc chasseurs, the hussars of liberty, and the artillery, all marched out; the old line regiments, still wearing white coats, and the blue and red

volunteer battalions extended themselves along the hedges, as far as the eye could reach, following the paths down to the Rhine. Every man had his pouch full of cartridges, and our new commandant, Nicolas Jordy d'Abreschwiller, a dark, strong man, who had left home a few months ago with the volunteers from his village, turned round in his saddle every moment and called out to us, as Neuwinger had done at Spires—

"Now then, you volunteers from the mountain, you must let us see what you can do to-day!"

We laughed and were pleased. About two the cannon began to fire in the distance; the weather was fine, and we could hardly see any smoke; nevertheless, the whole division had been hurrying on for an hour, when some staff officers galloped up ordering us to return to Mayence. Houchard and Neuwinger had attacked the enemy near Stromberg, but having heard that a corps of ten thousand Prussians was arriving from Trèves to take them in the rear, after having passed the Nahe, by surprise, they therefore ordered a retreat.

We returned towards nightfall, covered with mud and disgusted at having gone so far for nothing.

The next day carts brought in our wounded.

Houchard and Neuwinger, nevertheless, remained at Bingen; but on the 28th of March, masses of the enemy having come to attack them, they were obliged to fall back, and Neuwinger, who would hold his ground in spite of Custine's orders, was taken prisoner.

It was the first rout I had seen, for the battalion was ordered to occupy a hill, on which the gallows of the country round was standing, in order to check the pur-

suit of the enemy in that direction. In company of the 96th of the Line, and two other battalions of volunteers, we held that position from morning till night, and till then I thought I had never heard either bullets whistle or cannon-balls thunder, there were such showers of them that day.

The chef d'escadron Clarke, since then Duc de Feltre, supported the retreat with his Orleans dragoons; thousands of Hessian partisans surrounded him; he cut his way through them, and saw the mass of wounded and stragglers safe to the foot of the hill where we were.

Two days later Custine tried to check the pursuit of Prussians at Ober-Flersheim, between Alzey and Worms; but fearing to be cut off by the Austrians, who had just crossed the Rhine at Spires, he lost his head, and hurried his retreat behind the lines at Wissembourg, after having burnt his magazines at Frankenthal, and our corps d'armée was obliged to shut itself up in Mayence.

I have since seen crowds enough, but never such as I saw at Mayence after the retreat from Bingen; the large houses round the Place d'Armes were converted into barracks; the churches, synagogue, Lutheran place of worship, the market, and the seminary, were turned into barns for hay, stables, quarters for the troops, and the principal magazine was the cathedral. Yes, this accumulation of foot and horse soldiers, old regiments, free companies, burghers, shopkeepers, workpeople, women, and children, all mixed up together in the narrow streets and in the squares, along the ramparts, and before the gates of the town—this extraordinary spectacle is again before me.

Other commissioners arrived in the town, Pflieger, Ritter, and Louis; they were called clubbists; they

assisted Dr. Hoffmann, of Mayence, in demoralising the people, but they always were escorted by a picket, for every day the badly-disposed showed themselves.

We tried to get out once on the side next to Worms, and so disembarrass ourselves of part of the garrison, but unfortunately the Prussians guarded the roads too strictly, and they drove the detachment back into the place. We could no longer hold our ground in the open country, but had to defend ourselves at home. Instead of treating us like volunteers, we were placed under the same regulations as the troops of the line. At that time the adjutant-general Kléber had the reputation of being very severe on points of discipline; they said he had been accustomed to use the stick when in the Austrian service, and regretted he could do so no longer.

Our place-commandant was General Doyré. Meuynier, general of engineers, who had come expressly from Paris to fortify Cassel, defended that post with fifteen hundred men. Aubert-Dubayet, the adjutant-general Kléber, and the representative Merlin, attended chiefly to all details of service.

There was a permanent court-martial sitting in the Hôtel de Ville, and I recollect that nearly every morning two or three marauders were shot behind the Saint-Jean bastion, it was said for the sake of example; I can easily believe they were plunderers or rascals who had insulted or robbed respectable people, but you might be arrested at the complaint of a simple burgher. The whole country, since our retreat from Frankfort, had risen against us; now we had to pay ready money for everything, and we received no pay—rations were all we had.

The bad news from the Army of the North, the rout of the corps of Valence at Aix-la-Chapelle, the insurrection in La Vendée, where all the inhabitants rose as one man, priests, nobles, and peasants; the defeat of Dumouriez at Nerwinden; the intrigues of Pitt, who had set all Europe against us; the massacre of the French at Rome; the demands of Danton calling on all citizens to help the Republic, and insisting on the creation of a revolutionary tribunal for the trial of traitors, and the imposition of a tax on the rich; the speeches of the Girondins, always the first to declare war and to send us, the children of the people, to meet death by hundreds of thousands, and who were furious when it was a question of the life of a king who betrayed his country, or of conspirators and the wealth of the rich—all these things irritated one, and kept one in a continual state of rage; besides, the Germans outnumbered us five to one, and we could not revenge ourselves.

It was the 16th of April when the Austrians, the Prussians, and the Hessians showed themselves before the place. Many of the country people had brought vegetables to market, and when they heard the gates were to be shut, these poor peasants set off running with their baskets, and crying out as they ran.

I was on guard at the Gothor, and when I saw them passing out, I thought how much happier they were than we, to be able to go and live in their villages in the fresh air; the blockade of Landau came to my recollection; how wearisome to be shut up for weeks and months!

The enemy was not strong enough yet to begin the siege; but we were closely blockaded. We fired at his patrols at random; they did the same, and balls came

whistling in the streets, breaking windows here and there, sometimes wounding a passer by, who was immediately carried off by the townspeople with extraordinary lamentations; the women talked about the accident with their hands in the air, and thought it was war. They were destined to see something much worse before it was over.

The garrison made sorties every day, to Weissenau, Marienborn, Bretzenheim, and all the villages near, to bring in cattle, for Custine had not provisioned the place as it was his duty to have done. We had plenty of guns, powder, wine, beer, brandy, hay, and corn, but animal food was deficient. These expeditions soon came to an end, for the country people drove everything off into the woods, and we could at last find nothing to lay our hands on.

But bands of soldiers still went out marauding, and Marc Divès was always one of the number; this did not last long, for an order was given to fire on all who tried to get out; the ditches of Mayence were full of water, and one could not go along the narrow paths which led to the redoubts without being seen by the sentries, so no one dared to risk it. Everything remained in this state up to the end of April.

When off duty we did not know what to think. The Convention's bulletins ceased, but forged *Moniteurs*, printed by the Prussians at Frankfort, in their stead, representing France as entirely demoralised, mentioning the guillotining of a number of known patriots by name, the rebellion of the Army of the North against Paris, victories of the refractory party in La Vendée, the regency of Marie-Antoinette for her son Louis XVII., &c. Our officers told us in vain how false it all

was, and how the enemy printed these sham gazettes himself, and then sent them in to our advanced posts; uneasiness increased by degrees, and many talked about making a sortie en masse, repulsing the enemy and effecting a junction with the army at Wissembourg. The commandant Doyré, to check the growing insubordination, was obliged to put in the order of the day that Mayence was the barrier of the Republic against Europe; that the enemy could no longer invade us without taking it from us, and whoever proposed leaving it should be shot on the spot as a traitor to his country.

The Austrians had endeavoured to construct two batteries, one on the road to Worms, and the other above the windmill in front of the wood, where we bivouacked when we arrived from Spires; but our long forty-eight pounders dismounted them, and then we heard we were to be starved into surrender; but that Custine would relieve us—in fact, we were surprised he delayed so long coming to our assistance.

In the beginning of May sorties commenced, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another, to demolish the enemy's siege works, and that went on till the end. I remember we made a very vigorous sortie the night of the 30th towards the village of Marienbourg, where their head-quarters were. We thought it possible, and hoped to surprise the King of Prussia himself. Five or six thousand men left the town between midnight and one in the morning; they reached Frederick William's quarters, where hundreds of horses belonging to the royal guard were killed at their pickets; but the alarm had been given, and masses of troops, both cavalry and infantry, fell upon

the column and drove it back under the walls of the fortress. We lost a great many men in that affair, for a regiment of volunteers had mistaken the Saintonge regiment, which still wore the white coat, for an Austrian one, and had fired upon it in consequence. The next day Frederick William bombarded the town in a most furious manner; he must have been very much frightened the night before.

About the middle of the month, one very dark night, all our works were attacked on the Weissenau and Marienborn side; as that very night a sortie was in contemplation, nearly all the troops had been withdrawn from the redoubts, and there were only weak detachments left in them, which were overpowered in an instant. Then the assembly was beaten in the market-place and in all the streets. The cannon on the ramparts thundered, lighting up with its lurid glare the Saint-Philippe bastion and the citadel on the left, near the Rhine. Our works in Cassel also took their part; we fell in on the Place among a crowd of people who had hurried thither at the first alarm, and whom we sent home again. We did not lose time in calling over the roll, and the first battalions there assembled set off immediately to the help of the redoubts. The bridge of Porte Neuve had been lowered, and once on the glacis outside we knew in which direction to go, for they were firing at point blank distance in the redoubts.

Commandant Jordy cried, "Forward, comrades, at the bayonet!" and we ran on; the grape from the two bastions passed over our heads making a frightful noise. As we approached the first, St. Charles's Redoubt, it was swept clear of the enemy, but the Prussians swarmed round it, and they fought with a

'ury I have never seen equalled, except under the arch-vay gate at Spires. All my life I shall have ringing in ny ears the curses I heard in French and German vhen the battalion crossed bayonets with the Prussians ınd they could see one another's eyes by the flash of he musketry—it was butchery and nothing else. After ɔne discharge we did not wait to reload, but rushed 'orward; we felt something soft, into which the bayonet vas plunged, and at instants when a musket was fired ve caught a glimpse of heaps of dead and wounded, ınd of the rage with which the living were still fighting. This did not last long.

Suddenly two or three shells having rolled on the ɜpaulment of the redoubt, when they burst we saw the Prussians withdrawing their men. At the same time ɔne of our regiments arrived at the double, and took up ı position on our right behind the heaps of earth and ıpset gabions; we could not see one another. The ight was still going on in front of the Saint-Philippe Bastion, the eraekling of musketry decreased and began ıgain, mixed with cries, the word of eommand in French ınd German, and the continued cannonade. We could ılso hear horses galloping about in the dark. At the ɜnd of twenty minutes all was quiet. The battalion had 'ormed again, and eaeh man asked his neighbour, "Is :hat you?" such an one, "Is that you?"

Many never replied.

I also ealled out, "Father Sôme, Mare Divès, Jean Rat?"

And old Sôme answered—

"Here I am, Michel; how are you?"

"Well, and you."

"I have a slight scrateh, but it is nothing."

At the same time I heard Marc Divès talking among others, and say—

"The rascals! they won't be in a hurry to publish this in their gazettes."

Every one was listening; nothing was moving near us, only some of the wounded complained, and asked to be carried in.

The battalion remained there, waiting till daybreak for the order to retire. We had lost many men, but the Prussians still more on account of the grape. Those of our people who defended the redoubt when first attacked were killed to a man.

From that day the bombardment recommenced hotter than ever, shells, bombs, red-hot balls were rained upon us, the town was on fire in four or five places at once; we had hardly extinguished it here before it broke out there.

Sorties were continued as obstinately as ever on both sides of the Rhine, and in one of these, which was made to get possession of the Ile de Mars, where the Prussians had constructed a heavy battery, General Meuynier, who commanded in Cassel, was wounded by a splinter of a shell, of which he died some days after.

This was a severe blow to the whole garrison. Meuynier was a brave soldier, a good patriot, and an engineer of merit. More than one, on hearing of this misfortune, shed tears. The governor obtained an armistice to allow them to bury him in a small fort which he had caused to be constructed four or five months previously; and the Prussians, when they saw us march past with arms reversed, could not help rendering this Republican, who had fought so well against them, the last honours of war. They fired a

salute from all their batteries. Frederick William, if he had not much feeling, showed this time at least that he felt respect for courage and talent.

This happened the 13th of June.

Two or three days afterwards the enemy opened their first trenches to the left of Mayence behind the village of Weissenau. Our sorties were increased to destroy their works and defend our own redoubts. Sometimes we appeared to have abandoned them, but as soon as the others were inside they were swept by the fire from our bastions, and we sallied out to take possession of them again.

The struggle on these occasions was very severe, for the Germans were fighting under the immediate eye of their own princes, who watched them at a distance with their glasses, and we all know that fighting with their rulers looking on at them gives great courage to soldiers. But we repulsed them all the same; behind the hedges, in all the ditches, along the garden walls, and among the tombs in the nuns' burying-ground in front of the citadel, there you could see piles of blue and white coats; nor were our own men absent, though in rags, for since the magazines at Worms had fitted us out, rain, and snow, and sun had worn out everything. A sort of birds which abound on the Rhine, with long black and white wings, used to perch on the dead bodies and feed on them. It was very hot, and the weather was stormy, and when the wind blew from below, we did not stay long on the ramparts. Such sights as these make us reflect, when one says to oneself—

"There is to be a sortie to-night—to-morrow I may be lying there too."

Unless absolutely stupid, in spite of the habit of fighting, and the contempt one acquires for balls and bullets, blows from a sabre and thrusts from a bayonet, such ideas will occur from time to time, and one would prefer others more lively.

Every night, towards nine, when the Austrians and Prussians began to fire, and the shells, after quivering among the stars, rolled about the pavement in the streets, or fell on the roofs of the old houses, smashing the tiles and breaking through the ceilings into the rooms below, down into the cellars, and sometimes burst among stores of tallow, brandy, or resin, in the grocers' and druggists' shops, &c., blowing out the windows, then a fire would break out, amidst groans and tears; this was a sight I never could accustom myself to, although some people say use is everything.

And while people were calling out "Fire!" and running to help to put it out, as the flames increased, so did the shells and balls to destroy us while working at the fire.

Outside the crackling of the musketry, the thundering of the cannon, the song of the Marseillaise rising above the din; and then next morning at daybreak, picking up the wounded in the blackened streets, among still burning timber and roofs falling in with a loud crash; the tottering gables, and here and there in a corner poor women crouched up, holding their feet in their hands to warm them; old men hanging their heads down, sitting on the threshold of their ruined homes; others wandering in crowds about the streets with their bundles under their arms, like poor abandoned creatures; people formerly well-to-do, and to-day more wretched than beggars, dying of hunger. The young pay no attention to such things; but when

one grows old it all reappears like a horrid dream, and one asks himself—

"Is it really true?—have I seen all these abominations?"

And you answer your own question—

"Yes, and a thousand times worse!"

This is the way German princes bombarded their own subjects. Themselves in safety outside in handsome striped tents, with fine horses in the green wood under the shade of the orchards, where they gave entertainments, in which the peasants were obliged to dance to the sound of the clarionette, they conversed pleasantly together, and drank champagne. Ladies and song-writers even came to enliven them and see the sight from a distance; their carriages rolled along the white roads; unfortunately they were out of range, for it would have been a real pleasure to have fired on all such selfish mortals.

What gave us more uneasiness than anything else was that after two months' blockade and fifteen days' siege, several flour depôts having been burnt, provisions began to run short. The crowd of poor burnt-out creatures who had no longer a morsel of bread to eat, and who were perishing from want, used to take their stand before the governor's house weeping and groaning most lamentably, and begging him, for the love of God, to let them leave the town. All along the streets you could see nothing but this. The sentries were useless, for the men would force their way up the corridor, asking for permission at least for their wives and children to leave.

The governor, who would not allow the enemy to become aware of the state of the fortress through these

people, resisted until the 24th of June; but their complaints and lamentations had risen to such a pitch, that he opened the Porte du Rhin and let them out. They poured through the gate by hundreds, and many of the burghers, wishing to profit by the occasion, took their families out with them. This sortie lasted from nine in the morning till midday.

Mayence is separated from the Rhine by old moss-covered ramparts. As the poor creatures straggled along to reach the bridge at Cassel, the Germans suddenly fired grape upon them. I was standing sentry at the arsenal on one of the towers of the old rampart behind that place on the parade where there is a piece of water, and I could hear the screams of the women, crawling along in their rags and dragging their children after them; they seemed crazy; the men turned round and faced the death they saw approaching. A long line of these wretches were already crossing the bridges, when the cannon-balls fell among them and drove them into the water; the wheels of the mills five hundred yards lower down were stopped by the dead bodies, which they were obliged to thrust out again into the stream. And now let the Germans talk to us about their good princes, fathers of their subjects! I tell them, I, that these good princes of Hesse-Darmstadt, Weimar, this good King of Prussia—great admirer of pretty women and champagne—they were altogether nothing but miserable canaille—yes, canaille! many degrees worse than the September murderers, for they had never suffered as the people had; these victims were not men accused of conspiracy against their country, traitors, thieves, and spies, but their poor German fellow-countrymen, dying of hunger.

And I say, moreover, that those who support such beings, and declare that they are sent by God to teach us to be virtuous, deserve to be always ruled by such, who drive them with whips, and keep their heads under their heels.

The Germans may say—

"What were our princes to do? Were they to leave you in possession of Mayence?"

My reply is—

"They ought to have stayed at home and not to have interfered in our affairs. We had very good reason for getting rid of the nobility and clergy who had been eating us up for centuries. We asked them for nothing. It was for the purpose of bringing us back to slavery that you and your princes invaded our country. Slaves not only will be slaves, but they cannot endure to see others who are bolder and more courageous break their chains and declare themselves free men."

This is enough said—now I continue my story.

In spite of the very strict order to the contrary, not to allow any of these wretches to re-enter the town, our soldiers seeing them wandering up and down in despair between the fire from the forts and that of the enemy, could not stand such a sight; they picked up the wounded children; they opened the posterns to the poor creatures dying of hunger; they cried, yes, old soldiers cried, and shared with them their last morsel of bread and last drop of spirits. Our officers shut their eyes to it—they knew that in things where the heart is concerned the French do not allow themselves to be commanded; and then every one pitied them alike; the commandant Doyré was obliged to open the gates to them again.

Fifteen hundred inhabitants of Mayence perished in this manner, but, nevertheless, famine increased. Some disease broke out among the cattle, who were hardly fed at all, and to benefit as much as possible from the beasts we were obliged to slaughter, the ration of meat was increased, while that of bread was diminished. Unfortunately, men were attacked by the disease, and soon, towards the end of June, the rations of meat were discontinued; we had only a sort of oil made from fish with which we could make our soup, but a great many men in the battalion never could accustom themselves to this soup; they wasted away visibly. But when one has not been pampered in the days of one's youth, one becomes used to everything; and, thank God, I found this soup as wholesome as the bean-soup my mother used to make.

You may believe during these horrors I always went to see my sister at Saint-Ignatius, which, though shot through in many places by cannon-balls, still remained standing. The rain came in through the roof as if you were in the street; the federals' tents and huts filled the chapels and the cloisters; at the end of the choir they had knocked up a theatre, and had set up their cantine in the sacristy on the left; the great kettle was boiling and the smoke curled up the chimney.

As I entered this sort of fair, where the "Ca Ira," the "Carmagnole," card-playing, and disputes on politics never ceased, the first thing I smelt was a very good odour of cooking meat; for these sans-culottes always had meat when no one else had any or could find any; they laid hands on all the dogs, they caught the cats and rats with snares and traps made on purpose, and

many other extraordinary inventions; they were always gay and in good-humour.

Every evening that their battalion was not on guard or had to take its turn in a sortie, they acted pieces in their theatre, turning their rags inside out for costumes, and even dressing themselves up as women. Sometimes they made grimaces, which they called pantomimes; sometimes one of them would make speeches which were all nonsense, but which amused the audience in spite of famine and sorrow, and made one laugh—that is the greatest gift Heaven can make a soldier; the opportunities of being gay in war time are so rare, that if we did not meet them half-way one would pass years without laughing. I remember they played *Zemire and Azor*, *The Housekeeper*, and other farces, in which General Custine was represented preparing to set out to relieve Mayence; but the moment he was starting something was missing; at one time the powder for his guns, at another he had forgotten to sharpen his great cavalry sabre.

My sister had a seat in the front row at these performances; she scolded and praised the actors, she called out and told each what she thought of him; the actors would stop in the performance and argue with her, and that delighted the Parisians more than their comedies and farces.

When they saw that the citoyenne Lisbeth would soon give a defender the more to the country, they christened the child beforehand; some called it Brutus, some Cassius, some Cornelia; she paid no attention to them, but only thought about her copper. Of course she asked me to sit down at their mess, and I was always glad to accept, without asking where

the meat came from, or whether it was horse, dog, or cat.

Marescot had regained courage, he was even enthusiastic, for these Southerners cling to their blood in a most wonderful manner; he talked of nothing else but of the Republican baptism of Cassius; but something was to happen before that which I shall remember for a long time.

It was the 28th of June. That evening they began to bombard the cathedral; red-hot balls and shells lighted up the bell-tower from top to bottom, and the bursting of the shells in the interior making the little panes of glass in the painted windows glitter like flashes of lightning. We could see that from the road near the ramparts the battalion was drawn up, with grounded arms, waiting for a sortie, and as we filed out by the Porte Neuve the cathedral caught fire.

We expected to reach the enemy without being seen, for when things are so bright and dazzling at a distance you cannot see at night what is close to you. The trench was at the end of the valley opposite the citadel, behind some old quarries and the ruins of the burying-ground. By ill-luck our guide, a rascally peasant, who had shown us the way twice before, made a mistake, and we got into a village where some prince's staff was quartered; a number of cavalry and infantry were encamped close by, so that after a few shots we were so mixed up with dragoons and hussars that we completely lost ourselves. The commandant Jordy was knocked down; our captain, who tried to rally us, was stretched on the ground from a pistol-shot. Had it not been for the light from the burning cathedral which showed us our road, we should all have been taken.

We rallied enough to fight our way back, and we had to retire behind the quarries.

In the skirmish I received two sabre-cuts without feeling them, but when we reached the covered way, the warmth of the blood which flowed down my back under my left arm made me feel I was wounded; it was a sword-thrust. The other blow had cut my hat in two at the back, and my thick pigtail alone saved me from losing my head.

At first I said nothing, but as soon as we got in again I handed my musket to Jean Sôme, telling him I was wounded, and was going to the hospital. The bombardment was still kept up, and the sky was quite red; the cathedral was in ashes, and the houses near it had caught fire; the whole town was filled with a humming sound. It was about two in the morning. I was just going away, when some one called out—

"The federals are on fire!"

I looked to the right, and saw the church of Saint-Ignatius towering above the dark roofs of the houses, and in flames. Then I thought about my sister, and instead of going on to the hospital, I hurried down the Rue du Séminaire as fast as I could, and at the moment I came into the little square in front of the church, five or six houses close by broke out in flames. The federals outside, in the midst of this white light which lighted up the façades of the old gables and the windows, were quietly looking on among furniture, tents, and boxes, lying about in all directions. One was smoking his pipe, another holding some officers' horses. Many were asleep on straw mattresses, sentinels walked backwards and forwards before the muskets piled in the middle of the street; they let everything burn. Each

man got up or lay down, combed his hair, tied his queue, mended his uniform or his shoes, laughed and sang just as in daytime, without troubling himself about anything. The inhabitants left their houses as they caught fire, and silently disappeared with what effects they could save, father, mother, brothers, sisters, and infants. The old people followed, bowed down with misery. In all this confusion I could only think of Lisbeth, and seeing her cart standing in a corner at some distance from the fire, with its awning drawn over the hoops, and the old horse harnessed to it, and eating from a bundle of hay on the ground before it, I took breath. Marescot, close by the cart, was dancing the Carmagnole with his comrades like a set of madmen. I could not help calling out as I went up to him—

"What is the matter? Are you all mad?"

Then he turned round and began to laugh, and said—

"We have a son, a fine strong boy; jump up on the shaft!"

He gave me a shove, and then went on dancing and capering with the others. Never did I see such thoughtless creatures as these Parisians. Heaven and earth might meet in one common ruin, and not prevent them playing the fool.

Once on the shafts I looked under the awning and saw my sister lying in a good bed, her head supported by a large pillow, the child by her.

"Look!" cried she with delight; "see what a fine boy it is!"

I took the child in my arms, big and fat in spite of its miserable birthplace, and kissed it with pleasure. To him the bombardment, danger, and famine were as

nothing. The sparks and ashes which filled the air did not disturb him any more than the noise of exploding shells, nor the universal tumult; he slept under the protection of God, his little hands clenched with the quietest air possible.

As I gave him back to Lisbeth she saw my hand was bloody, and she asked me in a fright where it came from.

"Oh!" said I, "it is not of any consequence; we were returning from the sortie, and a hussar ran me through the arm."

But she began calling—"Marescot! Marescot! Quick, go and fetch the surgeon! My brother is wounded!"

I saw she really loved me. The federals who were standing by said—

"Why the devil didn't you say you were wounded, Citizen Michel?"

Several held me up, for I felt faint, and others took off my coat. Major Bompart, a fat man with a large nose and white eyebrows, his hat covered with oilskin, and his cloak rolled up like a shoulder-belt, was soon on the spot; he looked at the sword-thrust, which had gone through my shoulder, and told me if it had been a line higher or lower the large vein would have been cut. He washed the wound, and bandaged me well with linen bandages, which he carried with him rolled up in a pouch. My comrades looked on and said nothing. I felt so well that I wanted to stay where I was, but the major told me to go to the hospital, and that vexed me.

Marescot, Lisbeth from the cart, and the rest of them kept saying, "Go to the hospital at once;" some of them wanted to take me there, but I told them I was

well enough to go by myself, and when I had gone a little way I walked off to our barracks, for I had heard them talking about hospital fever which attacked the wounded, and besides, I had little or no confidence in Republican doctors, who had been mostly chosen among the barbers and dentists who first offered themselves.

So I went and lay down near Jean-Baptiste Sôme; half of the beds were empty. I went fast asleep, and as Marescot's child was to be christened the next day before the baggage-master, without saying anything about my wound, after roll-call I quietly returned to where the federals were bivouacked under tents. I felt my shoulder inflamed, but I would have preferred dying there and then to going to the hospital.

Lisbeth was very well pleased, and, at the same time, surprised, to see me; but to put a stop to her lecturing me, I told her I did not feel any the worse.

And the child was inscribed by the baggage-master on the register of the 3rd Parisian battalion by the name of Cassius, born the 28th June, 1793, of François Bernard Marescot, canteen sergeant, and of his lawful wife, Lisbeth Bastein. The banquet was held in the open air, a sort of patriotic repast, where neither the flesh of horses nor of cats nor of rats was wanting, nor wine nor brandy either, but there was not much bread, for the Prussians had set large logs adrift in the river, and they had destroyed the water-wheels; we were, therefore, obliged to use hand-mills; and, what shows that there must have been traitors in Mayence, almost every day the situation of our mills and our magazines was changed, and yet the bombardment was always directed to where they had been removed.

Well, this patriotic feast was as good as we could

expect in our situation, and I took home with me a large piece of horse for Jean-Baptiste Sôme, which gave him great delight.

A dangerous illness had broken out in the town, not only on account of the famine, but still more because they had fished the dead horses out of the Rhine to eat them. Those who were attacked by the disease never recovered—nothing could save them. Our hospitals were full of them; litters were always going and coming—for this reason so many wounded were to be seen in the streets; one naturally preferred trying to be cured alone than expose oneself to take the infection.

I remained with the battalion; I even went out on duty at the outposts with my arm in a sling, and I was fully prepared if necessary to cross bayonets as well as my comrades.

The Germans had worked so hard that their trenches almost reached our redoubts; looking down from the ramparts it looked like a great molehill as far as one could see. Half the troops were out day and night, near the guns, matches lighted, no one closed an eye, the "Ver-dà?" the "Qui vive?" the "Garde à vous!" and then the musket shots not fifty yards off. The Prussians were among us and we among them.

One very extraordinary circumstance was the attack on the small forts we held in the islands on the Rhine. A Dutch company in the service of the King of Prussia had been working some time at the construction of floating batteries in a village close to Cassel, and every day we were told that these batteries were going to show themselves. At the end of five or six weeks we thought no more about them, when one fine morning they appeared and floated gently down upon the islands with the

current. I was on duty in the Charles Redoubt—it was beautiful weather—imagine, on the mirror-like surface of the Rhine, with the sun shining full upon it, large square frames of wood, five or six feet out of water, with ports for guns, and covered in like casemates.

We were too far from these floating batteries to fire upon them, but when they came nearer the islands the firing began on both sides. Every ball that fell in the water splashed it up ten or fifteen feet, then eight, then six, and so on till it was spent. The Rhine, so calm but a few minutes before, foamed under the discharges of balls and grape, the smoke curled upwards, the echoes repeated the thunder of the guns, and the floating batteries came gently nearer and nearer. They at last brought up in a spot covered with trees facing the islands, their bullets took our batteries in flank, and as our mortars and the howitzers in our redoubts could not carry so far, we saw if that lasted twenty-four hours we should be forced to abandon the islands.

On that day every one, from the governor to the last soldier, was dreadfully vexed. It was clear that if the Prussians once got possession of the islands, their guns would demolish our mills and the old walls which bordered the stream, and then we should be attacked on all sides at once. In the evening, when we went back to the Place, we learned that the attack on the batteries was already settled, some volunteers had left for Cassel, and that the floating batteries would be dislodged at any risk. The battalion had supplied twelve men—old Sôme, and Laflèche, from Héming, were of the number. Without knowing how the officers were going to set about it, the idea of ascending the Rhine in small boats

to attack such machines as those made me think a little. Luckily the moon was in her last quarter, and, though the stars were visible, the night was dark.

Till two everything was still; one might have thought the enemy wished to lull us into security, for the usual bombardment did not take place. But at two the distant cannonade and the sharp crack of musketry warned us the attack was begun. My wound pained me very much, and I sat up in my bed, thinking—

"Poor Father Sôme, perhaps that last shot was for you!"

All these empty beds, from one end of the apartment to the other, with the windows between, whence I could see the stars shining, made my heart ache. This was, perhaps, the most wretched night I can recollect during all my campaigns. I was hot and cold at the same time; my shoulder was inflamed—I felt half beside myself. After having drunk all the water in my pitcher, and having walked about and listened for some time, towards morning I finished by going to sleep, and day had already broken some time when I was awakened by cries of joy, the "Ca Ira," and the "Marseillaise." Our people had succeeded in setting one of the batteries adrift by cutting its cable, and this battery, turning round and round in the current, without being able to stop, had gone ashore near Cassel, under the fire of the fort, and all on board her had surrendered themselves prisoners.

When I saw Sôme come in I embraced him heartily. The poor old fellow was wet through. He was one of the first to jump into the water, in a shower of balls and blows from boathooks, to cut the thick mooring cable.

The 1st of July the enemy destroyed our battery, called Le Bouc; the next they bombarded the citadel and the Karl Redoubt; then they set fire to the Saint-Sebastian quarter, and then they cleared out the Clubbists' Redoubt, and obliged us to evacuate Costheim village. Then their balls reached our mills, which were destroyed. The 13th they finished by demolishing the quarter of the Hôtel de Ville. The 14th there was an armistice; the Germans had just heard of the taking of Condé, they fired a salute in consequence, and we celebrated the taking of the Bastille and the grand federation of Paris by a patriotic representation on the Place d'Armes. We should have been glad to have had a few branches of trees and flowers to place on the altar of the country. Unfortunately inside the walls not a leaf was to be seen; everything was destroyed.

I was beginning to recover from my wound, and this fête, when Merlin de Thionville talked to us about what we had done for our country, the songs and the procession in honour of the Goddess of Liberty: all that filled my heart with enthusiasm.

The next day it was our turn to be burnt out. After destroying the part of the town near the Rhine, the Germans thought it was time to carry ruin in another direction. We all knew what the first red-hot shot which fell into our ruinous old convent indicated. We made haste to stuff our few miserable effects into our knapsacks, throw our mattresses out of the windows, take our muskets, put on our belts, and be off.

As I went downstairs a dozen shells burst in the courtyard, on the garrets, and in the monks' little cells. The street below was very narrow.

What was left of the battalion, without losing a

minute after beating the rappel, went and bivouacked in the market-place, near the cathedral, among its ruins, and we remained there until the 23rd of July.

At last the famine had become so terrible that when out for a sortie we only thought of obtaining food. If we chanced to see a soldier with his loaf strapped to his knapsack in the enemy's ranks, the poor fellow's fate was sealed. Five or six of the boldest among us would rush at him as if he carried the colours, and regardless of shot and steel they killed him, seized his loaf, and he who got hold of it first stuck it on the point of his bayonet. The Germans, maybe, never knew why some of them excited our rage more than others; well, it was neither their bad looks nor their bad luck, but merely their loaves of bread.

We were always pleased to see Merlin de Thionville, at the head of the hussars of liberty, charge the enemy. The redoubt facing Bretzenheim was named after him; and when, like all the others, it had been cleared of its defenders, Merlin sallied out again at the head of fifty men to retake it; he was looked upon as lost, but he came back again with his sabre red up to the hilt, looking as ferocious as a wild Indian. This man won every one's respect; they would have chosen him for general; but Rewbel, the other representative of the people, who only troubled himself about registers and accounts, was held in no esteem by the soldiers; nevertheless, all degrees of men are necessary in a Republic, and, as Chauvel very sensibly observed, the first thing is to keep your accounts clear.

During our greatest sufferings we heard one evening a heavy cannonade in the direction of Oppenheim; the sky seemed on fire there. We began to cry, "It is

Custine, he is coming to relieve us," and we hugged one another with delight. The garrison was under arms all night. I need not say how impatiently we waited for day, ready to rush upon the enemy like a pack of hungry wolves. But, when the sun rose, the officers in the bell-towers, with their glasses, saw nothing in the distance on the white roads but the enemy's patrols going from one village to another. What we had taken for Custine's cannon was the rolling of thunder.

At last, from waiting without getting any news whatever, we expected nothing; our only hope was that the Germans would make a general assault, that we might kill several thousand of them and then die ourselves. While such were our ideas we suddenly heard a report that our council of war had capitulated. At first no one would believe it, but our own officers informed us of it at morning roll-call, and then every one was furious.

This happened the 23rd of July, 1793.

The next day there was a suspension of arms, the garrison was mustered in the parade square, the most angry, among whom was Sôme, had loaded their muskets without saying what they were going to do; we formed a square, and about ten all the staff officers arrived in full uniform; the commandant Doyré, Aubert-Dubayet, the governor; Guy-Vernon, Donoy, Laribossure, Kléber, and the representatives Rewbel and Merlin. Cries of "Death to traitors! death!" began to be heard; they remained quiet in the centre of the square, waiting until the shouting ceased, and then our officers read out the conditions of capitulation to the men.

"Conditions of capitulation proposed by General of Brigade Doyré, commander-in-chief at Mayence, Cassel, and fortresses belonging to them, and arranged between the two generals:—

"Condition 1. The French army will deliver up to His Majesty the King of Prussia the towns of Mayence and Cassel, as well as their fortifications and all the posts belonging to them, in their present state, with the cannon, both French and foreign, ammunition and provisions, with the exception of articles hereinafter mentioned.

"Condition 2. The garrison shall march out with all the honours of war, taking with them arms, baggage, and other effects, the private property of individuals belonging to the garrison, and provisions for the route. They engage themselves not to serve against the armies of the Allied Powers for the space of one year.

"Condition 3. All generals and other officers, commissaries of war, chiefs and employés in the different military branches, and generally every individual Frenchman, shall retain their horses, carriages, and property."

And so on up to Condition 14, respecting the exchange of siege-money, the conveyance of the sick and wounded by water to Metz and Thionville, respecting the halting-places between Mayence and our frontiers, the occupation of the forts as each detachment left them, the delivery of arms, ammunition, and fortresses, the nomination of commissioners for handing over the magazines—in fact, the details upon every point of the capitulation.

This lasted half an hour; and when we saw that everything was arranged, that we retained the honours

of war and the right of carrying off our colours with us, as well as our arms and effects, the pleasure of seeing our country again soothed all our minds. It was a thing we had long despaired of. We said to one another with satisfaction—

"Well, it is all over; our chiefs are contented; we need not be more difficult to please than they are; we had nothing when we came, we shall have nothing when we leave. The poor inhabitants of the place must be more disgusted than we are with their ruined churches, magazines, and dwellings. We are going to see France once more, hear French people talk, and have news of the Republic; what more can we want?"

We all argued thus, and nevertheless, when, two days afterwards, we had to quit these old burned walls where we had suffered so much, and where so many of our comrades remained buried under the rubbish, we were truly grieved. Yes, the 25th of July, 1793, about midday, when the rappel was beaten on the Place d'Armes, and the colonels and commandants cried—

"Battalions, by files to the right forward, quick step, march!"

And we began to defile through the old streets, while thousands of miserable creatures stood at their doors looking at us, girls crying, the men who hated us at the bottom of their hearts, Dr. Hoffmann's clubbists, who trembled at being left behind, and who would soon have to settle their own accounts: it was a frightful spectacle.

A squadron of Prussian dragoons marched in advance of us, then came the national volunteers, federals from every province, with our beards of six months' growth,

our worn-out large hats, our leathern helmets, and our rags hanging about us, musket on shoulder.

They had not had time to amalgamate us in demi-brigades, but as far as rags, leanness, and courage went, we were uniform enough. In our rear came the old Saintonge regiment, still in white coats, and then the chasseurs à cheval from Languedoc, and then the rest.

As we traversed the Prussian camp the chasseurs' band began to play the Marseillaise. Then the song rose to the heavens from one end of the line to the other, and thousands of people who had hurried there to be witnesses of our humiliation, and who lined the road; burghers and peasants furious against the revolution, priests, French émigrés with the Prussian cockade in their hats, lords and ladies in open carriages, princes on horseback—in fact, all the aristocrats who had come to the siege of Mayence as an entertainment—all, when they heard our song and saw our looks, all grew pale enough. They must have thought—

"We did very well to allow them to capitulate, otherwise we should have been obliged to exterminate them to the last man."

Such was our exit from Mayence, not the sortie of vanquished men forced to humble themselves, but of brave men who had capitulated because it was to their advantage, and because they looked forward to taking their revenge. In a bargain every man looks after his own interests; he makes terms or refuses them; we had accepted them because the others had let us have the best of it.

Farther on, after having passed the redoubts, the trenches, and demolished villages, when we saw the green fields, the vines and forests, the high road bor-

dered by trees, cottages with their red roofs, in an instant all our misfortunes were forgotten; we breathed another air, and our officers gladly gave the word, "March at ease!"

What a change! I shall always remember the pleasure of marching with one's knapsack on one's back and the musket on the shoulder by the side of one's countrymen. The rest mattered but little; we thought no more about it; sometimes when we looked round at our old comrades, their toes peeping out of the shoes, and their noses like a crow's beak in winter, the long shabby queue, and their bright eyes, one said to oneself—

"What luck to get back again! How surprised they will be at home to see us come back in this state! They will want to carry us in triumph."

This was the idea of us all—we expected that the municipalities would go out to meet us, and the villages would quarrel for the honour of entertaining us, to the cry of—

"Long live the defenders of Mayence!"

We doubled the length of our marches to arrive the sooner. We were indignant at the sight of the Prussian dragoons who escorted us as prisoners, and in less than four days the whole division of General Dubayet arrived within sight of Sarrebruck, by Alzey, Kaiserslautern, and Hombourg.

Of course the people we had ruined did not treat us too well; a pound of butter cost a florin, one of meat thirty-six kreutzers, everything else in proportion; we had literally eaten up everything; these Germans, therefore, could have no good feeling towards us; but we expected other things in France.

Everywhere along the road, at each of our halts we heard, right and left, the remarks of the peasants and townspeople. Many things they said astonished us. At Küzel a chance observation of the burgomaster who had come to superintend the distribution of rations gave me to understand that La Vendée was in open revolt; farther on I heard that Marat had been assassinated by a woman; what surprised me still more was to hear a Hombourg man, in whose house I passed the night, talk of the flight of the Girondins as a fact. This talk went through the ranks, what one heard he told the others; Dumouriez's treachery, which had happened three months before, seemed something impossible.

By degrees, as we approached Sarrebruck, the idea of passing near Phalsbourg without seeing those I loved made my heart ache. Many others thought so too; but I was well known to the commandant Jordy, who was aware that Chauvel, the people's representative at the Convention, had chosen me as his son-in-law; and the fourth day, at the principal halt, I ran the risk and asked for forty-eight hours' leave. He was sitting erect on his horse, his large cocked hat with its red plume resting on the back of his head, and his long black queue hanging down from under it. He looked sideways at me; he was at least as anxious as I was to go there too. Before answering me he closed his great jaws, and I trembled for fear he should say "Impossible!" At last he smiled and asked me—

"You want to embrace Margaret, don't you?"

"Yes, commandant; and my father too."

"Well, that is but natural," returned he, looking round to see that no one was listening. "Well, now, pay attention; as soon as we get to Sarrebruck come

to my quarters and I will give you leave in writing for forty-eight hours. But say nothing about it to your comrades, and be off to-night, for if the others hear of it the remainder of the battalion will be off to the woods. Now fall in again, and hold your tongue."

Everything happened as the commandant Nicolas promised me. At the hôtel of the Grand Cerf he gave me forty-eight hours' leave of absence; more than a hundred and fifty had made the same application, but he told them no one would have it. Sarrebruck was the last German town. I had only to cross the bridge to find myself in France, and that same evening I set out after having only told Jean Sôme where I was going.

I set off after the retreat was sounded, leaving my musket and pouch with the baggage. The seven leagues we had already marched since morning did not prevent my pushing to Fénétrange the same night. Oh, what it is to be young! what courage one has when one is but twenty and in love! How one moves along, how easy life is, how many ideas pass through your mind, how you laugh and how you cry! I hurry along, I see Margaret waiting for me, my old father, Maître Jean, &c. I feel as if I had wings—it is really true. Such I was in '93.

I never saw a finer night, a July night as light as day; hedges, vines, shrubberies, and fields, everything smelling deliciously. In that extensive flat country I heard nothing but the sound of my own footsteps on the road; from time to time an over-ripe fruit would fall from a tree, and the Sarre in the distance flowing through the reeds.

A league from Fénétrange, about four in the morning, as the crimson sun rose over the vine-clad slopes, and

hearing the mowers sharpening their scythes, the idea came into my head to take a bath. I was white with dust; for two months none of us had changed either shirt or pantaloons, so you may fancy in what a state we were. I went along a narrow path through a field of oats to the banks of the river. I threw my knapsack and hat on the ground and untied my shoes—what a good idea I had to wash myself! In the middle of the stream, stretching my arms and legs in the fresh-running stream in the shade of the old willows where the morning light was quivering, I felt myself revive, and said to myself, "Michel, life is a good thing."

For more than half an hour I did nothing but swim up and down under Rilchengen Bridge. Some peasants passed by with their forks or their scythes on their shoulders, but they never looked at me.

When I came out of the water to dress, the sun was already warming the sand, the larks were rising from the corn, and a long way off, at the far end of the plain, I recognised our mountains, our beautiful Vosges, blue as ever, the Donon, the Schneeberg—ah! what a lovely view!

Then I began to think about making myself look as well as I could before Margaret saw me, and to comb my hair with my toothless old comb. But you should have seen my shirts and the rest of my effects; I dared not brush my coat or my breeches for fear of tearing them to pieces. They were all in holes.

I chose my last clean shirt and my best shoes mended with string—what would you have when one has but a choice of rags? I was no longer the dandy Michel with his great Sunday tricoloured cravat, his large flowered waistcoat, and long queue combed and plaited

by good Father Bastien; but I hoped Margaret would know me again all the same, and that she would be glad to embrace me, that was the principal thing; and when the other shirt was well washed, wrung, and nearly dried on the bushes hard by, the knapsack closed, and the sword buckled over it, I cut myself a stout stick from a hedge, and set out again fresh and confident.

I could not help noticing as I passed through the villages what distress there was, and when the people came out of their houses, their wretched air, their bent bodies, told only too plainly how the war had swallowed up their chief support and left great wants behind. These poor old people looked round as I passed; perhaps they thought, "It is our Jean, or our Jacques!"

Then when I called out to them as I went by, "Salut et fraternité!" they would sorrowfully answer, "Heaven be your guide!"

I first heard people abusing the Mayence army at Fénétrange, which of course made me very angry, and I should have taken notice of it if the rascals had been of any importance. I had stopped at a small waggoners' inn, like that of Maître Jean at Baraques, and while I was eating a piece of cold beef with a good appetite, and drinking a bottle of country wine, the barber came in with his napkin and his shaving-dish under his arm. The innkeeper, an old man, sat down in a wooden chair in the middle of the room, and the other began to shave him, chattering all the time like a magpie; saying that the Mayence traitors had come to an understanding with the Prussians to surrender the fortress to them, and that they all deserved to be tried

by the Committee of Public Safety and guillotined within twenty-four hours.

I looked round at this idiot; he took no notice of me; he was only a dwarf, with a turned-up nose, goggle eyes, and a rat-tailed wig—a creature who had hardly a breath of life in him; the sight of him pacified me at once.

The old innkeeper having got up from his chair to wipe his chin, I emptied my glass and threw the second louis I had received from Maître Jean on the table. The host seemed very much surprised; this louis was, perhaps, the first he had seen in the course of the year, and when he had turned it over and over at the window, he took from a press a small basket full of sous and assignats; he counted out seventy-eight livres ten sous in assignats, and told me my breakfast was thirty sous. I therefore understood our assignats were only worth twenty-five per cent. That opened my eyes, and I comprehended how frightful the distress in the country must be. If the townspeople and peasants had not had the estates belonging to the nobles and the convents to raise money on, and if the assignats had not enabled them to buy them, the revolution would have been a failure.

After leaving Fénétrange, I noticed all along the road very great excitement; the news of the surrender of Mayence was become public; all Alsace and Lorraine was terrified at it. There was despair everywhere, for several fathers of families who had set out as district representatives to democratise the Germans had never written home, and no one knew what had become of them. I passed along without looking about me. After having seen battles, skirmishes, and

massacres, such things had very little effect upon me.

As I went down the hill into Wéchem, I saw a crowd of people before the mayor's house. In the midst of this crowd there was a brigade of national gendarmes; it was a call for volunteers.

The moment I crossed the bridge the corporal of gendarmes came to meet me and asked for my pass, which I immediately handed to him. He read it over. The crowd looked on. He seemed very grave, and after looking at it returned it, and said to me as he leaned down from his horse—

"Comrade, you don't seem very flourishing; you had a hard time of it down there; but all the same don't boast about returning from the siege of Mayence—they may do you an injury."

Then he quietly went back to his post, and I stepped out again, and climbed the hill as I grasped my stick. I was not in a rage exactly, but indignant at such a collection of idiots, who could live for a twelvemonth in their village, among their friends and acquaintances, eating and drinking at their ease, and buying land cheaply, while we were risking our lives every day, suffering cold, hunger, and all sorts of privations to protect them from the Austrians and the Prussians, and then accused us of betraying them. The stupidity of the people made me sick. I have often thought since then that vagabonds of all sorts, those among the people as much as the nobility and clergy, tried to raise the Mayence army against the nation by these atrocious falsehoods; perhaps they really did so.

At last, once on the hillside, notwithstanding my joy in seeing the ramparts, demi-lunes, bell-towers, and

houses of the old nest at the end of the white high road once more, notwithstanding my hope of soon seeing Margaret again, and my father and friends all in good health, this thought of the people's stupidity was in my head till I reached the glacis and outworks of Phalsbourg.

But then the pleasure of finding myself so near those I loved made me feel more contented. It was midday, and I heard the drums beat for dinner in the infantry barracks. As I crossed the drawbridge, there, under the octroi shed, opposite the corps de garde, stood fat Poulet, the former employé of the gabelle, now become octroi superintendent; he was munching an immense sandwich of white cheese, and in his straw hat, which had a crape band to it, he wore a cockade as large as my hand.

By dint of informing against people under the Republic, as he formerly did under Louis XVI., and receiving the rewards of fifty livres earned by the misery of numbers of people, the scoundrel had a belly which reached from his chin to his knees; his shirt was open on account of the heat, and his chin and ears were crimson. As I came near him, lean and in rags, after looking at me for a moment, he called out to the guard opposite—

"Ha! you there, carry arms! turn out the guard! Here is Michel Bastien, one of these famous defenders of Mayence who have just given the place up to the Prussians. A hero! Ha! ha! present arms!"

He called out as loud as he could, and mocked me. The soldiers sitting in a line, their legs hanging down against the balustrades of the bridge, looked at me. I turned pale with anger, and, without going out of my

way, I gave the Citizen Poulet a blow from the back of my hand across the face which knocked the sandwich out of his mouth, and sent him down on his head under the balustrades. He roared out—

"Murder! they are murdering a patriot! help!"

I walked quietly on, without hurrying, and the old sergeant on duty, who was standing there, laughed and said—

"Well hit, comrade, well hit!"

The soldiers looked at me with surprise, and the sergeant said—

"Do you come from Mayence?"

"Yes, sergeant."

"You have not been living too well there?"

"Not too well."

"Well," said he, turning to his men, and laughing, "if the generals have turned traitors, the men have not been paid too much, certainly."

Poulet, who had got up again, called out—

"Arrest him! he is an aristocrat; in the name of the law, arrest him!"

"Be off, comrade," said the sergeant; "good luck to you."

I walked on into the town. This famous box on Poulet's ear quite relieved my mind. I could only look forward to the pleasure of seeing Margaret and my friends again. More than one, seeing me going along the street, turned round and said—

"Ha! it's Michel Bastien. Good day, Michel!"

But my feelings were such that I could only give them a nod.

At Fouquet's corner, when I saw Chauvel's shop, its windows, and the front full of almanacs, books, and

newspapers, I felt quite choked with happiness, mixed with uneasiness, for would everything be in the same state as when I left? should I find every one well? I stood under the little roof over the door; the shutters were shut to keep out the heat. I walked across the shop, stooped, and looked in through the glass door at the end. Margaret and my brother were at dinner. They, too, looked surprised; with my beard, my broken old hat, my clothes in rags, they could not recognise me. But when I opened the door, and said—

"Here I am!"

There was a sight to be seen, Margaret in my arms, Stephen hanging round my neck, sobbing and crying—

"It's Michel! We never hoped to see you again so soon. Good heavens, what happiness!"

They laughed and cried. Etienne said—

"How happy poor father will be!"

One took my knapsack, the other my hat, and then we began embracing again. I looked at Margaret, I pressed her in my arms as one I loved best in the world. I thought she looked very pale; her eyes were bright, her beautiful black hair was in disorder under a morning cap, and her pleasant brown cheeks had grown hollow. I said—

"Have you been ill, Margaret?"

"No," she replied; "and I am strong and healthy enough, but uneasy at having no news from you, and then the country's mishaps; but sit down."

The little table was placed close to the window. On it was a dish of cabbage, a small piece of bacon, and a bottle of water.

"Stephen, take ten sous out of the till," said Margaret; "run over to Tony and fetch some ham; I will go

down into the cellar and draw some wine. Ah! Michel, we drink water now; times are hard; we must save all we can."

She laughed. I looked at her with eyes of love, eyes of twenty. I took her hand, but she slipped away and went for the wine. Then for a moment I looked round the little room, filled with books, and I said to myself—

"So you are here again once more!"

My eyes filled with tears, for I knew it could not be for long. And when Stephen came back with his plate of ham, when Margaret put her bottle of wine on the table and we were all happy and looking at one another, when I told them that I had only leave of absence for forty-eight hours, and that I must leave them the next day, their pleasure was considerably lessened. But, as Margaret said, duty before everything—first of all things the Republic and the rights of man.

As she said this she was wonderfully like old Chauvel—the same confident air, the same clear and distinct tone of voice. I could not help thinking—

"When you are married she will always be in the right; she will always be saying—'Do this or do that, it is your duty.' I shall be obliged to confess her good sense, and do as she says. Well, if it was only to be now, we could be very happy indeed!"

These ideas caused me no pain, and I cannot say what pleasure it was to feel her little hand on my arm. From time to time the shop door opened, and the bell rang: Stephen went and served the customers—soldiers, townspeople, and peasants. We ate and talked about the affairs of the nation, about Maître Jean, my father, and every one. Margaret, like Chauvel, was at first

uneasy about the Republic; it was, so to say, covered with blood. When she heard that for four months we had neither letters nor papers from without; that I came straight from Sarrebrück, ignorant of all that had taken place since the 6th of April, she wanted to tell me everything, and I learned more that day than during all my service as volunteer either in garrison or in the field.

I knew, however, that Dumouriez, after his defeat at Nerwinden, had followed La Fayette's example, and tried to lead his army to Paris to unseat the Convention and re-establish monarchy in France. I had been told that he and Cobourg, the Austrian general, had come to some arrangement; that he was to put Condé into his hands and then strike the blow; but that having been summoned to the bar of the Convention, seeing himself discovered and his whole army rising against him, the traitor, after having delivered the people's representatives into the hands of our enemies, escaped to the Austrians with part of his staff and the sons of the ci-devant Prince of Orleans. I knew, also, that Philippe-Égalité had been arrested, that the Girondins had accused Danton of acting in concert with Dumouriez and the Orleans princes, and that he had indignantly replied—

"That the cowards who were capable of sparing a Louis XVI. were the only persons to be suspected of seeking to restore the throne and of treating with traitors."

But what I did not know, and what Margaret then told me, was the terrible measures which they had been obliged to take to put a stop to this treason—the creation of a Committee of Public Safety, and a Com-

mittee of General Security, to which every district in France, and the representatives of the people with the army, were to report every week; the creation of an extraordinary tribunal composed of five judges, ten jurymen, and a public accuser, with full powers to arrest and bring to trial all conspirators; the establishment of a tribunal in many other towns; the putting without the pale of the law all counter-revolutionists; domiciliary visits to disarm suspected persons; the inscription of the name of every inhabitant on the house doors; the cards of true "civism" which one was obliged to carry about on one's person; the pains of death decreed against any banished individual found again in France, &c.

Then about the opposition shown by the Girondins to all these measures, now become necessary; they who had no pity either for the strings of wretches arrested from morning till night before the bakers' doors, nor for the miserable workmen who were paid with assignats which the tradespeople refused to take, nor the thousands of labouring men sent to the frontier through their own folly, since they would rush into war in spite of the Montagne. She told me of the indignation of the people at those who had only bowels of compassion for the king and his family, the nobles, and the rich; the numerous petitions which were sent in praying for their expulsion from the Convention; the charges they brought against Marat, his appearance before the extraordinary tribunal and his acquittal, to the general satisfaction of the patriots.

I knew nothing of all this.

Margaret also told me of our want of success in the North, where thirty-five thousand English and Dutch,

commanded by the Duke of York, had reinforced Cobourg, so that our enemies found themselves one hundred thousand men against forty thousand, and how we had been obliged to fall back as far as Valenciennes, fighting a battle every day. She told me of the league between the nobles, the priests, and the peasants in La Vendée to support Louis XVII.; their frightful insurrection under the leadership of Cathelinau, Stofflet, Six-Sous, Souchu, and others, who were not of the ancient race of conquerors, but waggoners, gamekeepers, bakers, ploughmen, and mechanics, which did not make them the less narrow-minded, since they fought against their own interests, and were as ferocious as wolves, for they shot their prisoners, and their women massacred the wounded, in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ!

She also told me how the fury of the Girondins and the Montagnards, who reproached one another with these misfortunes, increased; the creation of a maximum price of grain, and a forced loan of a milliard from the rich, notwithstanding the selfishness of the Girondins. Chauvel said, in a letter which Margaret showed me, that on that day the Girondins and Montagnards had been on the point of attacking one another, and that had it not been for the calmest men of the Plain, they would have fought in the Convention. The Girondins wanted to turn all the Paris authorities out of office, and transfer the Convention to Bourges. There the Montagnards, in their enemies' hands, were lost. These Girondins, Royalists at heart for the most part, but who had not the heart to avow it, nor to combat the Republic loyally and frankly —these wretches, who wished to stop the advance of

Republican opinions, succeeded, from what Margaret told me, and what I read in one of Chauvel's letters, in causing a commission of twelve to be named from among them; and this commission had no less to do than to abolish the revolutionary committees, and to announce the suppression of the extraordinary tribunal. They wanted to encourage thousands of selfish people who were afraid; the fate of these pitiless beings during the famine touched them more nearly than that of a people full of courage and devotion. Then France, surrounded by her enemies, would have been left powerless; the émigrés, the monks, and the bishops would have returned in the train of foreign armies; they would have cemented the re-establishment of their privileges in the nation's blood more strongly than before and for ages to come. The English would have taken Dunkirk, it is true; the Austrians Valenciennes and Condé, the Prussians Mayence and Landau, the little German princes Lorraine and Alsace. We should have had a small French kingdom swarming with great lords, and a mass of poor people to keep them by their labour as we had previous to '89.

This was too much! The Parisians, led by Danton, saved our country for a second time by rising at once and laying hands on the traitors. These events had taken place two months previously, the 31st of May, 1793.

One Girondin had the audacity to say if one of them was touched Paris would be destroyed from top to bottom by the departments, and that her place on the bank of the Seine would know her no more. But the Montagnards had them arrested all the same. Marat had drawn up a list of the most dangerous. Some of

them were already in prison; others, Pétion, Guadet, Buzot, Barbaroux, &c., had made their escape; they were raising armies in the provinces, carrying off public money, displacing municipal authorities, creating tribunals to try the patriots; their general was Wimpfen, a noble and a Royalist. One has often talked about traitors, but I believe there never were seen such traitors as these, for if French generals have before now fought against us as enemies, at least they never endeavoured to divide the nation against itself by talking to it about its rights, and by taking the name of Republicans.

"This is our present situation," said Margaret. "Fifty departments are in open insurrection; Lyons, the second city in France, has risen against the Convention; the Royalists have stormed the Hôtel de Ville; they have arrested, tried, and executed the chiefs of the patriots; Marseilles and Bordeaux are also in revolt; to-morrow Valenciennes will be in the hands of the enemy; the Girondins are raising troops in Normandy, and are marching on Paris; La Vendée and Bretagne are in flames; the English have stopped the grain which was coming to us from abroad; their minister, Pitt, has declared all our ports blockaded; he has subsidised Prussia, Austria, Sardinia, and Spain; he has even taken Baden into his service as well as the Bavarians and the Hessians, all those people who were only waiting for the taking of Mayence to invade us. The Lorrainers, Alsatians, Francs-Comtois, Champenois, Picards, and Parisians still move with the Revolution, for, to add to our misfortunes, thousands of peasants have hoisted the white flag in the Cévennes, and are advancing by Auvergne to the support of the Vendeans,

and cut off our armies of the Pyrenees and Alps from Paris; Corsica seeks to give herself up to the English; in fact, everything is against us—everything falls on us at once."

"But then," cried I, "Margaret, we are lost!"

"Lost," said she, setting her teeth and laying her two little hands, closed tight, on the table—"yes, if the Girondins had remained in the Convention to hinder and prevent every measure for the public advantage, we should have been lost indeed. But the time for fine speeches is gone by. Danton, Robespierre, Billaut-Varenne, Collot-d'Herbois, Carnot, Prieur, Lindel, Saint-Just, Couthon, Treilhard, Jean Bon-Saint-André, Guyton-Morveau, Cambon, all my father's friends are there; in one week they have drawn up a constitution over which the Girondins have lost their time for six months without completing it at last. It is simple, clear, firm, and just; it is a real Republican constitution, which the others would not have. Now great things are going to happen, for first of all France must be saved. They have made us tremble, others must tremble in their turn. First of all the Royalist generals have been dismissed; no Bouillé shall again show the Prussians the road into France, nor a Rochambeau warn the Austrians of our movements; no La Fayette shall again conspire with the court, nor aristocratic governors surrender our fortresses. Dumouriez will never again attempt to seduce his army into bringing kings back into France. We will have the sons of the people at our head, men of our own race and of our own blood; in his last letter my father says so. The Committee of Public Safety is already stretching out its hand to seize Custine, who left you in Mayence to

perish with hunger, without relieving you, or even provisioning the place at first; the extraordinary tribunal is now drawing up his indictment. You will see how all will go on now. If we must perish many shall perish before us, and if the others establish conventual and seigneurial rights among us once more, they will have some trouble in doing it."

As I listened I felt more confidence, and said to myself—

"Now, Michel, is the time to conquer or die, for if the others get the upper hand, Chauvel, Margaret, and yourself, you have already said and done too much to draw back—you will be sent to the guillotine as the Royalists did others at Lyons. So, then, woe be to those you march against—they have pity on no one; we will be without pity too."

When I looked from time to time through the glass door, I saw all sorts of people who were attended to by my brother; I noticed all their faces wore an anxious look, and that the same ideas were in every one's mind: they asked, the moment is come to know if we or the others are to stand or fall. Looking at these working-men's faces, and peasants, and soldiers, who, remembering these poor people, were spending their last farthing in time of famine to learn the latest news, the idea occurred to me that a people determined to remain free would defy the universe. Many of us would perish, it is true, but in the end we should gain the victory.

Now I think I have told you all that Margaret said to me then respecting the affairs of the nation. We also talked about Maître Jean, who had been sent deputy to Paris by the district, to be present at the

fêtes of the 10th of August, and at the adoption of the new constitution by the primary assemblies.

Night was drawing on, and as I was anxious to see my father that day, I set off for Baraques about seven in the evening. I will not tell you how glad I was to see the dirty old street once more, the forge where Benerotte was at work, the Three Pigeons, and Catherine, as I went by, and then to press my poor old white-headed father, now bent double, to my heart; he cried, and could hardly let me go again, while his lips trembled against mine; these are things every man of good feeling can understand—in fact, one must be made of wood not to do so.

But I must tell you what reception my mother accorded me, for if I did not, many people would hardly believe it. Well, after embracing my father, when I turned to her with open arms and called out, "Mother," she got up, turned her back upon me, and darted up the ladder, looking me all over most savagely, and without saying a word to me she crept into the garret, where she remained as long as I stayed in the house. I was greatly hurt, but my father consoled me as well as he could, and we spent the night sitting side by side near the little hearth, roasting potatoes in the ashes for our supper, smoking our pipes, and looking at one another while we talked about our happiness and our hopes.

My good father told me he had never been so happy; being Sunday he dined with Margaret and Stephen, and talked about them as if he adored them, never having been so well treated, so considered and respected, in his life. He thought as much of my good fortune in winning Margaret's love as I did myself, and as for Stephen, it was his greatest delight to see he could get

his living without hard work, in consequence of the education which had been given him, his good conduct, and his knowledge of business, which increased daily. The position of Mathurine and Claude at the Pickeholz farm with Maître Jean gave him satisfaction also, for, he said, they were in a better and higher position than his own, and what could he want more? He was much pleased when I told him about Lisbeth and Marescot, and the birth of their little Cassius; he was never tired of hearing me talk about them. We sat there till morning, when my father put on his Sunday coat and accompanied me to town. We were stopped at every door in Baraques; the old women and our friends were all glad to see me again, and wished me luck. At Phalsbourg, too, in spite of the evil reports current about the Mayencers, when they saw me the patriots comprehended that if we had surrendered the place it was not our fault.

I intended to set off again at ten, but Margaret had arranged matters otherwise; she had taken a place by the courier for me at five in the morning, thus I should reach Nancy without much fatigue. All night she had been repairing my clothes, and had not yet finished, for all day she continued putting pieces in, sewing on buttons, washing and ironing; in the meantime some of the patriots came to see me—Eloff Collin, Raphael Menque, Genti, all of them. I was obliged to tell them all about the defence, our privations, fires, famine; and when they heard all I had to say, declared the generals had been traitors, but the army was blameless.

Poulet had informed against me as a deserter to the Committee of Surveillance; but this time, instead of getting the reward of fifty livres, the scoundrel had a

famous reprimand from the public accuser, Raphael, for my pass was perfectly regular.

So the day passed, and when five o'clock struck we supped, earlier than usual, sorry to part, but well pleased at having seen one another again. Margaret had replenished my knapsack with a pair of new shoes and two strong linen shirts belonging to Father Chauvel; besides there were thread, needles, buttons, pieces of cloth and linen, everything was there; and when the time came to say adieu, when we could hear the bells of the courier's vehicle crossing the place, every one went with me to the archway of the Bœuf-Rouge; then came embraces, good wishes, shakes of the hand, injunctions to be prudent, &c. Then we parted.

Such is life! It was half-past five; the conveyance was rolling along towards Mittelbron; the bridges succeeded to the stones of the street, and then came the long, dusty road, which seemed endless. How sad it is to leave without knowing when we are likely to see one another again! In such cases as these it was ten to one against me, and though I was not afraid, yet I felt that it was so.

I hoped when I got into Baptiste's coach to be able to sleep all the way to Nancy; I wanted it, after my journey from Sarrebrück to Phalsbourg, and the night I had just passed with my father without closing my eyes. But I was out of my calculations; five or six jobbers, as they used to be called then, an old woman and myself filled the coach. The jobbers were going to Nancy, ostensibly to buy tobacco, and did nothing but wrangle about the rate of exchange, the value of assignats, the quantity of paper with Louis XVI. on it which was to be burned, Danton's proposals and

Bazire's replies. They did not trouble their heads about me, supposing I could not understand a word of their discussions. I soon found out, however, that their Saint-Vincent tobacco was wheat, which they were going to forestall; but it was no business of mine, and I would rather have slept than have listened to them. The old woman said not a word; she had a large quilted cloak with a hood to it, such as our peasant-women wear in winter; she kept looking in the corner, her lips alone moved, and I believe she was telling her beads.

The others never ceased talking; besides, in every village we passed through people were astir. The national gendarmes came and asked for our passports; all suspicious persons throughout the country were arrested. I have seen, as I went by, whole families shut up in barns and watched by national guards; a sentry at the door, and sometimes a municipal officer examining them. What a commotion in times like these! Distress, famine, and danger avail nothing; on the contrary, the more the people suffer the more restless they are; thirty or forty women in rags, with their little children in their arms, surrounded the coach at every change of horses, crying out, "Charity, citizens; for the love of the Republic, of liberty, give us bread, bread!"

Then we could hear the "Ca Ira" in the public-houses; sometimes pickets of gendarmes trotted by, escorting a carriage full of aristocrats.

I remember too, in the environs of Héming, in a large field of peas lately picked, some workmen were erecting a sort of pigeon-house, and one of the jobbers said to another—

"There is the telegraph!"

They all looked out of the little windows, and I looked at the erection too, wondering what it could possibly be. Then the dealers began talking to one another about the invention of the telegraph by a certain Chappe, which could transmit signs from one end of France to the other, and so take the place of thousands of couriers. The eldest of them said that he who two or three years before had known of this invention would have become the richest man in the world.

Fortunately, three or four got down at Luneville, and there was only the old man, the old woman, and myself.

As in those days there was no mechanical break to the coaches, at every descent Baptiste stopped to put on the drag, and then he stopped again to take it off before we ascended the next hill, so that the courier required fourteen hours to go from Phalsbourg to Nancy. At last I went to sleep, when in passing through a village the lights and cries of the beggars woke me up again; it may have been two in the morning; the old dealer, with his cotton nightcap over his ears and his round hat on his knees, snored, and just then I heard the old woman crying to herself; she sobbed, and then stopped and blew her nose under her cloak to make no noise; I listened to her for a long time; sometimes she said—

"My God, my God, have pity on me!"

My heart felt for her; I thought to myself—

"What can this poor old woman be crying and lamenting about in this way?"

At last I said to her in German, for she spoke German—

"Listen, grandmother; tell me why you cry and lament so—are you ill?"

She seemed frightened, and at first made no reply; so I went on—

"Don't be afraid; I, too, have left friends behind me—an old father and a betrothed—whom I may never see again. Tell me quietly what is the matter. I am only a private soldier, but if it is possible to be of service to you, you can count on me as far as lies in my power."

It seems my words and my voice inspired her with confidence, for she began to tell me she was going to Paris to the Committee of General Surveillance, without even knowing what it was, but because a neighbour had assured her that she would get a pardon for her son, a baker at Strasbourg, who had been for fifteen days in prison at the Pont-Couvert for refusing to take assignats. She told me the former vicar, Schneider, public accuser at the criminal tribunal, was the cause of her son's misfortune; for this vicar, after having confessed people for many years, now caused all who had a little property to be arrested.

She continued sobbing bitterly, and I, believing that the grand vicar must be a sort of Poulet, getting his money by denunciations and lies, felt very indignant. But what touched me more was when this poor old woman told me she did not know a soul in Paris, and all she had was the name "Committee of Surveillance" written on a piece of paper. How a mother must love her child thus to risk herself in the world at seventy years of age, without speaking a word of French, and trusting to God's help alone!

Day broke slowly. On our right rose the tower of

Saint-Nicolas, and the recollection of our march to the sound of the cannon came into my mind. Two years had hardly elapsed, and what changes since then! The traitor Bouillé, La Fayette, Louis XVI., the Queen, the Comte d'Artois, the Feuillants, the Girondins—what ideas these names gave me! And then our entry into Nancy, the long line of prisoners we escorted to the gallows, the narrow streets flowing with blood, the wretched Swiss of the Châteauvieux regiment who had their throats cut in the houses; the carts full of dead at the Porte Neuve, townspeople, soldiers, workmen, women, children, all heaped up together; the hideous folly of my brother Nicolas in the midst of these massacres. The times were well changed. The people's turn was come, and treason out of doors made it neither tremble nor shrink from the consequences.

All these things passed before my eyes like an old tale. The poor old woman was at her prayers again.

About seven in the morning the first houses in Nancy, the summer-houses, the little gardens, the vineyards, and their great buildings with six rows of windows, ancient convents, doubtless the old ducal palace, the squares planted with trees, and large gardens behind gilded railings, passed in quick succession before the coach windows. Along the wide streets more than one house still bore the marks of the cannon-balls and bullets of the Marquis de Bouillé. I looked on in a dream till the vehicle entered the yard of a large hôtel; the court at the end was encumbered with sacks, bales, and barrels; above all extended the roof of a large shed.

Here the coach stopped. We got out. I took my knapsack, and told the old grandmother to follow me, which she did, bringing her basket with her. We went

into the hall of the inn; it was full of people—carters, tradesmen, townspeople—coming and going, eating and drinking, and talking business. The courier stopped at Nancy more than an hour. I called for bread, cheese, wine, and a sheet of paper. I told the old woman to sit down and keep up her courage; and while she ate and drank at one corner of the table, I wrote a letter to Chauvel to tell him about the siege and surrender of Mayence, my journey to Phalsbourg, and the pleasure I had in embracing Margaret, my father, and friends. I finished with the story of the old woman, and begged him to receive the poor creature kindly, give her good advice, and help her as far as he could.

Having folded the letter and put the direction, Rue du Bouloi, No. 1, I recommended the poor old woman not to lose it, but to deliver it as soon as she arrived in Paris without losing a minute. I told her she would be received by a good man who spoke French and German, and who would do his best to get her son out of the prisons of Pont-Couvert; she cried, and thanked me as you may well believe. Then, with a light heart, I paid for the wine and the rest, and set out to rejoin my battalion at the new barracks, where the 2nd Lombard Battalion and the 4th of the Gravilliers of Paris were quartered; the whole city was full of infantry and cavalry; chasseurs of Languedoc, hussars of liberty, Parisian Federals, and battalions of volunteers. The greater part were billeted on the townspeople; but, to speak the truth, these people did not seem very glad to see us. The representatives sent to the army of the Moselle had denounced our generals to the Convention; Aubert-Dubayet and General Doyré had been arrested; the gazettes talked about nothing but the abominable

capitulation of Mayence; we had been deprived of our leaders, and were to be sent to fight the peasants in La Vendée.

This is what I was told when I got to the barracks; distress was painted on every face; what greater misfortune could happen to us than to be looked upon as traitors and cowards? Jean-Baptiste Sôme, Marc Divès, and even Jean Rat ground their teeth with rage, and if Maribon-Montaut and Soubrany had found themselves with us, instead of being at Metz, I am sure they would have been riddled with balls.

So at last the people, from seeing treason everywhere, ended by suspecting its own defenders.

The federals in barracks with us talked of nothing but the assassination of Marat, and sent up petitions for the execution of the Girondins; they asserted that Charlotte Corday had been instigated by them to assassinate Danton, Robespierre, and the friend of the people. My sister Lisbeth and Marescot breathed nothing but vengeance; officers and soldiers became more and more excited on the subject, and in the midst of all this confusion the brave Merlin de Thionville arrived from Paris and told us he had defended our generals, they had been set at liberty, and the Convention had passed a vote of thanks to the army of Mayence; everything else was forgotten; cries of "Vive la nation!" began again, the citizens gave us a better reception, and thought it an honour to see us at their tables.

Then came the fêtes of the 10th of August; it was one of the grandest of Republican ceremonies; the altar of the country decked with laurels, arms, and military trophies, cannon all round, and the Goddess of Reason on the summit; it was one of the finest sights I ever

beheld; and then patriotic speeches, and the bands of all the regiments and battalions together playing the Marseillaise, processions of younger citizens, banquets offered to the brave Mayencers all along the wide streets and in the magnificent squares of the city—such sights remain before your eyes, and in your hearts, if you live to be a hundred.

It was in some sort the living representation of men's good sense, of their love of justice and fraternity. Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, neither monks nor bishops ever invented anything so fine, so simple, or so natural.

Every one understood what it meant. The portraits of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques were also on the altar, and I maintain such saints as they were worth quite as much as the others, and that Saint-Crispin and Saint-Magloire are not to be compared with them.

At all events we are all free; I do not quarrel with those who think differently, but I pity them with all my heart, and I would bring them round to my way of thinking if I could, as I think it is the better. They may say the same of me, on that score we are quits, and that ought not to prevent us from fraternising together. The principal thing is to do neither violence nor wrong to any one. These fêtes lasted three days, and we started for Orleans about the middle of the month; men and women all embraced us; fraternity reigned among us, the children ran after the battalion; several of the stronger ones carried our muskets for us as far as the environs of Toul.

It had been decreed that we should be conveyed by post into La Vendée, but that meant we should go there by carts. Only our officers had town vehicles, which

were called landaus. The peasants round about, put in requisition with their horses to carry our baggage, went ten or twelve leagues, then others took their places, and the first returned quietly home. We followed the conveyances on foot.

The weather was fine, and what I recollect of that long march was that they arrested Englishmen everywhere, on account of Pitt's rascalities; that domiciliary visits were constantly made, and the sight of distress around increased every march. There was so little corn that then, in harvest time, as fast as it was cut it was thrashed. They would not wait, and on our march we could hear them thrashing in the barns from four in the morning till midnight.

The farther we advanced into the interior of France the more the people looked at us with dislike. Once out of Lorraine, patriotism seemed to diminish every step we took, and at every halt there was always a dispute about rations and lodgings, even under sheds or in stables; the municipalities wrangled about everything—bread, wood, meat, and even straw; and as we drew no pay, and were all in rags, and our shoes were in holes, more than once, had it not been for our former commandant, Jordy, now become general of brigade, who spoke cheerfully to us, and cried, "Vive la nation!" "Vive la République!" "Courage, comrades, we will change all that!" "Liberty depends on you!" and so on—had it not been for this brave fellow, as I said before, the whole column would have mutinied, for when one sacrifices oneself the selfishness of the bad makes one sick. It was for them we were going to fight, and these very people, if they had their own way, would have quartered us in their pigsties and fed us on bran

It was, therefore, quite affecting as well as novel for us when we reached Orleans to see the mayor, his assistants, and all the municipal officers come to meet us and receive us enthusiastically. We had begun to think there were no more Frenchmen in France; and we found the very best—true patriots—in fact, real Republicans.

We were hardly drawn up on the Place in front of the Hôtel de Ville before we were surrounded by a numerous crowd of people, and when Jordy said, "Present arms! ground arms! fall out!" two or three citizens had taken us already by the arms and led us away to their families, not as strangers, but as brothers, and the citoyennes, young and beautiful women, came and crowned us. Jordy, who was a good speaker, said to them in the square—

"Thanks be to you, Orleanais; you are the first who treat us as sons of your country, as friends, and as countrymen."

He made many other affecting observations. We had our eyes full of tears, and cries of "Long live the Orleanais! long live the brave garrison of Mayence!" seemed never to cease. Jordy said more than was true, for the Nancy patriots, after Merlin's return, had also treated us very well; but at such times enthusiasm has the better of us, and we cry out what seems finest and most expressive, and most agreeable for those who are about us.

True it is the Orleanais gave us a good reception, and in this beautiful town it was that they began by forming us in demi-brigades, according to the decree of January 21st, 1793, which they had not been able to put in force earlier, as we were in the field.

Our battalion, the 2nd of Paris Lombards, and the 2nd Gravilliers, in which Marescot was, then formed the demi-brigade of Paris and Vosges. I had been corporal for a long time, but I took off my stripes to join the gunners' company, with Marc Divès and Jean-Baptiste Sôme. From having been in the Mayence redoubts we knew how to serve guns, and our little field-pieces were nothing in comparison to the great forty-eight pounder carronades, which we had often handled together there. So we remained all together, and it was a great satisfaction to me to think I should see and play with little Cassius every day. He always laughed when he saw me walk into the canteen; the whole battalion seemed to have adopted him; every one kissed him; one would have said he belonged to them all. Lisbeth, also, was glad to see me in the battalion.

So August passed.

We were told many things worth mentioning before we left Orleans. First of all, that our former general, Custine, was condemned to death for having carried on a secret correspondence with Wimpfen and the Girondins; for having neglected to provision Mayence, and for not relieving it; for allowing the allies to take Valenciennes, in spite of the orders sent to him to march. Then we heard he had been replaced in the army of the north by our former adjutant-general, Houchard.

These news struck our officers particularly; they understood that the Committee of Safety did not trifle with generals, and that they had better be careful to do their duty. We also heard that Toulon had surrendered to the English with its arsenal and the fleet; that the minister Cambon had decreed the creation of a public ledger

for the inscription of the Republic's debts; that the Convention, amidst the greatest perils, was calmly discussing a civil code, in order to regulate the rights and interests of the French, both for persons and property. Every one of course supposed this code would be called "Code of the French Republic, one and indivisible," and that it would be one of the greatest glories of the Convention to have originated this useful work.

Some days later, the second column having arrived, we left Orleans under the command of Kléber; we passed Blois and Tours, always keeping the Loire on our left. This fine river flows calmly and peaceably through a level country; small woods, vine plantations, orchards, but principally meadows, fields of corn, barley, and oats form its banks as far as the eye can reach; little hemp, but fruit trees in quantities. Little sandy islets just put their heads above water, and the old towers of ancient cathedrals, covered with sculpture, and old châteaus look down on us from a distance above the hedges and bushes.

Notwithstanding the abolition of bells, we could hear the churches humming on these tranquil waters from morning till night, and after having marched for leagues the cathedrals did not seem to have changed their place, so level was the land.

Small boats were moving up and down the Loire, with a large net at the end of a pole; the boatmen all wore straw hats. Near the towns larger boats, full of grain and goods, were floating, some up, some down, the river.

Covered with dust from the roads, our muskets on our shoulders, coats and pantaloons ragged and torn,

many of us barefooted, we looked at them as we marched along, Kléber riding in the midst of us, his blue coat buttoned up to the chin notwithstanding the heat, and his great cocked hat and tricoloured plume white with dust. He was a rigid disciplinarian, but there never was a better for looking after his men on a march, seeing that they had their rations, and that the sick were attended to.

When mayors and municipalities haggled and disputed, Kléber's loud voice, and his look like a lion—for his face was just a lion's in good-humour—his air of indignation and contempt soon shut their mouths; he had only to look at them over his shoulder, with his grey eyes half closed, and everything came to hand most readily—there was no waiting for billets. Five or six young officers constantly followed him, galloping about to receive or carry his orders. Every time we arrived anywhere, all night long there was singing and laughing in his quarters; but on duty he was quite another man, and never jested. If you only saw him at a distance, you understood he was indeed a general, and who never listened to unnecessary words when the enemy was coming on, and when we were just asking ourselves, "How will the action begin?"

I tell you all this beforehand—when we are once at it you will see better still.

We arrived at Saumur, where the head-quarters were. There disputes arose as to under whose orders we were to be, and what they would do with us; for five or six representatives of the people, Ruelle, Philippeaux, Gillet, were all in this place at once, without mentioning Merlin, who marched with our column, and

a number of officers and generals who had come from Paris with the sans-culottes.

I do not at all despise the sans-culottes, but Paris had already then furnished the armies of the North, the Rhine, the Moselle, the Alps, the Pyrenees, with so many battalions, and those who now came to join us were heroes for five hundred livres—creatures paid to do their duty—these wretches did us more harm than good, for they found no one Republican enough for them; they depreciated every one, which did not prevent them wavering at the first cannon-shot, and crying out—"We are betrayed!"

As the first federal battalions, volunteers, workingmen, fathers of families, employés of all sorts—in fact, men in earnest, steady under fire, calm, and prompt, so did this abominable breed of yelpers, brawlers, and idlers tremble for their own skin. If the Lombards and Gravilliers had had any powder to spare, they would have fired on them, because of the disgrace these rascals were to their native place.

Saumur is a strong fortress. The former Hussars of Liberty, now called the 9th Hussars, and other troops of cavalry, were quartered in the barracks. We were billeted out. It was reported we were to lose our leaders, and we were still more dissatisfied. They did not even know if we were to join the army at Brest or that near La Rochelle, or if Canclaux, who five months before had driven the Vendeans back from Nantes, would command us, or Rossignol, a Paris clockmaker, who had been made general. These men were generals in command—ours, like Aubert-Dubayet and Kléber, were only generals of division, who could not command columns of troops. They were talking of putting us

under the orders of Santerre, a brewer from Paris, only a general of division like our own, and this enraged us still more.

At last, after some days' discussion, it was decided that the Mayencers should join the army at Brest, commanded by Canclaux. Kléber remained with us as general of division, and we were ordered to leave for Nantes. The army was delighted, for Canclaux was said to be really a general, and not a clockmaker or a brewer. But our general was a ci-devant Count Canclaux. I do not mean to say for a moment that he was a traitor, but he kept to the old routine observed by Louis XVI.'s generals, from which such men as he can never free themselves; and soon we found what this routine of dividing his forces instead of fighting in a body would cost us.

But there is no need to hurry—blunders and misfortunes make their appearance soon enough. You may easily believe that the sight of all the egotism and vanity ever since we left Mayence; the bad news we received; treasons, defections, and massacres; the onward march of the enemy menacing us on every side at once—as you may suppose, all these things gave us plenty to think about, and, indeed, many were sadly discouraged by them. But in the march from Saumur to Nantes, something put heart into us again; we learned that our brave Montagne representatives trembled not; they stood firm as the rocks whose base neither the roar nor the fury of the waves could move.

As we passed through Angers we read the Convention's famous decree ordering a levy en masse, and even the raising of the whole of France to crush our enemies at once and for ever. I must tell you about it, for

then you can better understand our enthusiasm; besides, no nation in the world could show aught so strong, so beautiful, or so grand in its history's pages.

Here you will see the difference between asking in the name of eternal justice or in that of human pride. The Republic alone could thus raise its voice and ask similar sacrifices of the nation. On the Place at Angers, before the sombre old cathedral, in the midst of an immense crowd assembled from all the country round, the commandant, Flavigny, read us the decree, and cries of "Long live the Republic! Conquer or die! To the enemy, lead us against the enemy!" began again, as they did the first time it was proclaimed that the country was in danger; sabres and muskets rattled, standards waved; the astonished countrypeople rushed into our ranks; the National Guards arrived, the tocsin was rung; every one rose and marched in support of the Republic.

I begin:—

"Until our enemies shall have been expelled the territory of the Republic, every Frenchman is permanently required for military service—the young men will go out to combat; married men will manufacture arms, and transport provisions; the women will make tents, clothes, and assist in the hospitals; the children will scrape lint; old men will cause themselves to be conveyed to places of public resort, where they will excite the courage of fighting men, their hatred to kings, and devotion to the Republic. National buildings shall be turned into barracks, public places into manufactories of arms; the earth in the cellars shall be washed to extract saltpetre from it.

"Muskets will be exclusively entrusted to those who march against the enemy; service at home can be carried

on with fowling-pieces and steel weapons; saddle-horses will be brought into requisition to complete the cavalry corps; harness-horses, except those used for agriculture, will draw the artillery and provisions. The Committee of Public Safety is charged with taking immediate measures for establishing a manufactory of arms of all descriptions capable of responding to the energy of the French people; it is consequently authorised to create such establishments, manufactories, and workshops as may be thought necessary for the execution of these works, and for that purpose to require the services throughout the Republic of all artists and workmen capable of contributing to their success. For this purpose a sum of 30 millions of livres shall be placed at the disposal of the Minister of War, to be drawn from the 394 millions of assignats which are in reserve in the chest with three keys.

"The central establishment of this extraordinary manufacture shall be in Paris. The representatives of the people sent to see to the execution of this law shall have the same powers in their districts, acting in concert with the Committee of Public Safety; they are invested with the same boundless powers conferred on the people's representatives attached to the armies. No man shall be allowed to cause himself to be replaced by another in the duty assigned to him; public functionaries must remain at their posts. The levy shall be general; unmarried citizens, or widowers without children, from eighteen to twenty-five, shall be the first to march; they must betake themselves without delay to the chief town in their district, where they will be drilled every day and instructed in the use of arms, while they are awaiting orders to march.

"The representatives of the people will arrange the calling out and moving bodies of citizens to the points where they are to muster, so that rations, ammunition, and all war material may be there in necessary quantity. Places of muster will be determined according to circumstances, and indicated by the representatives of the people sent to carry out the present decree, acting under the advice of the generals and in concert with the Committee of Public Safety and with the Provisional Executive Council. Each battalion organised in its district shall assemble under a banner bearing this inscription: 'The French people in resistance to tyrants.'"

Directly after this proclamation we left Angers for Nantes, where our three columns arrived one after the other, the 6th, 7th, and 8th of September, 1793. This city, which lies on the right of the Loire, is lined by quantities of boats, vessels, and other craft, lying at anchor or cruising up and down. I, who had never seen anything like it among our mountains, nor even on the Rhine, was astonished indeed.

For the first time I had any conception of the greatness and wealth of a commercial city where merchandise came by itself from all parts of the world, with no other trouble than to rig masts and set sails when there was any wind.

Quantities of other troops, who made part of the army of the Brest coast, filled the town, where we were magnificently entertained by the authorities—they treated us to patriotic feasts. All the wealthy people in this place were happy to see the Vendeans could not pay them a visit without passing through our ranks. They had a sort of admiration for our rags, and as the

general depôt of food and stores was there for the supplying of Brest, Lorient, and Rochefort, we each received a new pair of shoes after the fête. But the next day, September the 9th, we had to take the field, and then it was we were destined to learn something new.

As we followed the route after leaving Saumur, we had already noticed on the other side of the river a country whose features were continually changing; little woods, then high ferns, hamlets buried in verdure, numberless orchards surrounded by thick hedges, and above the hedges hollies, stunted oaks, chestnuts, all that growing without design, with no sign of cultivation, without the slightest mark of man's hand—a real wild country, in fact, where the inhabitants left everything to chance, and troubled themselves about nothing.

It was La Vendée we were looking at, and which became more overgrown by degrees as we followed the downward course of the river; it was there we had to go and dislodge the men, who were there by thousands —a population of poachers and smugglers, of inferior nobility, surrounded by gamekeepers and refractory priests rooted in ignorance; small farmers and tradesmen; peasants who called themselves "the lord's vassals." How can I explain all this to you? They clung together like their own thickets—neither cut down nor trimmed for centuries.

Not a single high road through the country, nor a road of any sort where two oxen could pass abreast.

The sight of this made one think a little; the dullest soldier could see what difficulty there would be to form a line, and no enemy to be seen at any distance; we should have to burn everything down to see our way

Then the report of all the disasters the patriots had experienced in this wretched country, the horrible cruelty of the women, who killed the wounded, rendered one very hard; one said to oneself—

"So much the worse; if they shoot us, we will shoot them; if they have no pity, neither will we. The Republic comes first."

What we had thus done of the road from Ancenis and Angers was only the beginning of La Vendée, but it extended much farther. Between the Bocage and the sea was a district called the Marais, where more men of the same sort passed their existence in shooting the wild fowl, which frequented the pools and reed beds; these men clung to serfdom as tenaciously as the others, and we had to encounter them also.

Our demi-brigade, the free mountain chasseurs, and a squadron of mounted chasseurs passed the bridge at Nantes the 9th of September, at mid-day exactly, under the command of Kléber. We knew that six or seven thousand Vendeans, posted near the Grand-Lieu fish-ponds, held the village of Port-Saint-Père with guns and all that was required for our reception. General Beyser, an Alsacian from Ribeauville, was to follow us with five or six thousand men to support our attack. The weather was very fine.

Merlin de Thionville, with his great sword in his belt and his tricoloured sash, marched by Kléber's side. They were both on horseback in the centre of the battalion. Our six four-pounder field-pieces followed, with two mountain howitzers; the mounted chasseurs were in front as scouts. We all looked about; we saw nothing extraordinary—no Vendeans were to be seen. But once on the other side, in narrow paths bordered with apple

and pear trees laden with fruit, we could no longer advance in column; we were obliged to make a flank movement; but before advancing further, Kléber, who, though he looked like a lion, was as cunning as a fox, ordered two companies to deploy as skirmishers to the right and left of the road. This movement was hardly executed before the firing began in all directions.

Then we discovered that we were surrounded by numbers of those vagabonds concealed in the thickets, who would have cut us off if we had not thrown out skirmishers in our front. The chasseurs charged forward, the better to clear the ground, but the last files of the squadron had hardly turned the corner of the wood before a heavy fire betrayed the presence of the main body of the Vendeans. The chasseurs came back at a gallop, leaving some of their number behind; more than one horse had a red ribbon on his flanks, showing where the ball had struck him. Poor creatures! they do not fall at once when wounded; they gallop on, but it does not last long.

Then we saw the unfavourable side of a war like this; we never knew exactly what we had before us. Kléber ordered double the number of skirmishers forward; it was sufficient; the enemy fell back, and the column continued its march, always keeping within range. We, with our guns and ammunition well covered both right and left, had nothing but chance balls to dread; but our turn to advance was soon coming, and that was all we asked.

It was more than an hour, though; then we reached the vicinity of the fish-ponds, and saw the open country. Wretched villages, the walls of mud, and here and there in the distance we saw small churches with

slated roofs. But on our right, about two cannon-shots off, was the whole Vendean assemblage. They were there in swarms; on the edge of the ponds and in the village of Port-Saint-Père, where their head-quarters were. The scoundrels were not deficient in artillery, for as soon as they saw us they fired two or three rounds, either to get the range or to defy us to advance.

Between us and Port-Saint-Père was a branch of the fish-pond, whence flowed a tolerably deep stream. This branch might be three hundred yards wide, and high grass, reeds, and withies hid its banks. The Vendean skirmishers, when they fell back before ours, had taken all the boats to the other side; to attack them was difficult.

But Kléber, after inspecting the position with his staff and Merlin de Thionville, ordered the formation of two columns of attack; he moved our guns forward to the heights of Saint-Léger, opposite the village; bullets hailed around us, and balls whistled over our heads; their guns were pointed too high.

At last we had the word to fire. Our balls enfiladed the principal street of Port-Saint-Père, cutting off arms and legs, throwing down the posts of the sheds, and driving about the heaps of manure which the Vendeans had caused to be spread in the streets. Of course in the distance we could hear loud cries like the murmuring of women and children running away; and when our first shells set fire to the farm-houses, and the flames began to dance along the roofs of their old huts, then obstinate old men quitted them, dragging their mattresses after them. We could see all this going on in the filthy street. At the same time our two columns charged down on the river—officers, gene-

rals, representatives, banners, plumes, and bayonets, all pell-mell and screaming—

"Vive la nation!"

On the other side the Vendeans closed up and cried—

"Vive le Roi!"

Our cannon-balls passed over our heads and ploughed up their ranks. Then through the smoke I could see a frightful carnage; the river prevented their meeting at the point of the bayonet, but they fired on each other point blank; several of our men threw themselves into the water to bring the boats across to our side, and the Vendeans knocked them on the head or thrust them under water with long boat-hooks; the water was red with blood; hundreds of wounded floated down the stream struggling and clinging to one another.

At last we got possession of some boats, which were hastily fastened end to end, and which answered the purpose of a bridge. Then the whole body plunged upon it; Merlin, with his hat on the point of his sabre, was one of the first; he kept calling out, "Forward, forward! Vive la République!" which we could hear above all the rest of the shouting. We fired two or three rounds of grape, but we had not the range, and it fell into the water. All at once a staff officer ordered us to advance: we turned our guns and galloped down. Below we could not get on, but all round the village, in the orchards, where the Vendeans were defiling in companies, with their large felt hats, their red handkerchiefs, which they called "Cholets," which answered the purpose of pouches, their grey smock-frocks, there we fired rounds of grape upon them; the ferns were full of them; some of them crawled into the high wood to find water or hide themselves.

Unfortunately others who were in ambush behind the cemetery wall never ceased firing on us; they took a leisurely aim, and in less than a quarter of an hour they dismounted two of our guns; the drivers of the ammunition-waggons, who had been put in requisition at Nantes, ran off with their horses; three of them were already down. Our whole company of artillery would have been destroyed there if the grenadiers, after crossing the stream, had not marched on the cemetery with fixed bayonets. Then the chasseurs à cheval passed also leading their horses, which were swimming, by the bridle; and about four, the Vendeans having, without doubt, heard that another column was coming to turn their flank, evacuated the village and retreated. We had routed them: Port-Saint-Père was in ashes. I have since been told that seven twelve-pounders and two English culverines were found among the ruins.

It was all over: we had opened the road between Nantes and La Rochelle, and our column was to advance to Lower Poitou to collect provisions and supplies; but this time I was not destined to follow its fortunes, for just as the order arrived to cease firing, and as I was sponging out my gun, I suddenly fell on my knees, and then lay by the side of three or four of my comrades, without feeling what was the matter. I recollect that well; the next moment I felt mortally cold, the sweat ran like water off my face, and then I lost all consciousness, and only came to my senses some hours after in a cart with ten other wounded men who were going from Nantes to Angers; other and similar carts followed in a string. The hospitals at Nantes were so full of patients they were obliged to send us farther back.

My wound was a ball on the chest. It had not penetrated, because it was spent, and it had struck me above the sword-belt and pouch-belt crossed; but below I felt as if I was crushed inwards and could not draw my breath; it was the force of the blow. I also spat blood. I had been bled already. When I came to myself on the route, and felt this dreadful oppression, the idea came into my head I was a lost man. My comrades, too, were not in a much better state; one had his head bandaged, another his arm, the next one his leg; they were covered with blood; they looked about them pale and sad at the road they rolled slowly on; several wandered as if they were dreaming; others did not say a word; the waggons drove along without looking at us or troubling themselves about us, singing, whistling, lighting their pipes with their tinder-boxes; two or three of them would get together and talk about their village or some inn, the Golden Lion or the Red Grapes, where they were well treated, or the contrary—so they drove along.

The next day but one after the action we were between Ancenis and Angers about three in the afternoon, and we arrived at Angers at nightfall. I could remember nothing, and I had some trouble in collecting my ideas; life, Margaret, Chauvel, the Republic, all were alike to me, but the idea that I had either a ball or a piece of a shell in my body made me uneasy, and as my arm, where they had bled me at Nantes, was still tied up, I also fancied it was broken. When one has lost a quantity of blood one's ideas begin to become confused, and those who insist that the blood is life are perhaps not far wrong.

CHAPTER IX.

ANGERS, with its lofty houses and slated roofs, its cathedral, and its tumble-down fortifications, resembled all the old towns I had seen near Worms and Mayence; it seemed to have been built on the same plan. I never saw any beauty in these rat's-nests, which people pretend to admire for want of something to do. I have always admired what was new, and in my old age I shall not change my opinion; I wish I was twenty instead of ninety-five, so you will understand this old town did not interest me much: our hospital, an ancient building, with a courtyard and a garden, wide staircase, and corridors upstairs and downstairs, was close to the Porte Saint-André. Fortunately, when we arrived, many of the beds were empty, so we were taken in immediately. Every morning an old doctor and five or six young men came to see us; my chest was as black as night—it frightened me. I remember the old doctor explained my case to his pupils, and one of them came and bled me several times—every moment he told me to draw a long breath, to see if I could breathe, and every day I got better, especially when

they gave me half rations of bread, meat, and wine—then I once more saw pleasure in life, my ideas became clearer with regard to the Republic, and all I wished for was to rejoin my battalion. Next to me was an old officer of the 7th Light Demi-Brigade, who liked talking to me; he had a gun-shot wound in the arm, and when I was strong enough to walk about, every day from nine to twelve we walked about the garden in woollen cloaks and cotton nightcaps. Notwithstanding his grey moustache, this man was as fiery as gunpowder; from him I first heard of the abominations of the Vendeans, for his legion had been in the midst of this insurrection from the very beginning. He told me that thousands of former excisemen, salt-makers, custom-house officers, smugglers, gamekeepers, and poachers, obliged to work like every one else, in consequence of the abolition of privileges and of the innumerable duties, wandered about the country in '91 and '92 trying to excite the people to revolt; but the peasants, in spite of their ignorance, would not stir. No doubt they all said—"You cry out, because the trade of wolf or fox suits you better than that of sheep; smuggling, laying informations, and poaching brought you in more than that of digging the ground or thrashing in a barn!" and all the refractory priests' predictions had no effect except on the women, who groaned and made themselves miserable—an easier thing to do than to get one's head broken in defence of the altar and throne. At last common sense had the best of it. The nobles, indeed, conspired with the bishops, and when the Prussians were invading Champagne, if we had been beaten these good Frenchmen had made up their minds to fall on our rear; but the news of Valmy kept things quiet, even

the priests' predictions ceased. All the country's misfortunes were requisite to give these men courage to attack us.

It was the levy of three hundred thousand men in March, 1793, which gave these men their opportunity, at a time when even our existence as a nation was menaced. Then the young men, the "Gars," as they were called, when ordered to march like other Frenchmen in defence of their country, found it safer to remain at home, munching chestnuts and drinking wine with the good curé, their grandmothers, and their loves; the arrival of national gendarmes to oblige them to fulfil their duty had so exasperated them, that in the course of twenty-four hours these former tax-gatherers, gamekeepers, and smugglers had thousands of men under their orders. It was neither God nor King Louis XVII. who caused them to rise, but indignation at having to quit their Bocage. At the same time, refractory priests preached to them that they were supporting our holy religion, and that naturally flattered their vanity; they believed it was true; many, indeed, expected to rise again the third day, and their wives kept their bodies unburied, and waited in expectation.

This is what Lieutenant Deteytermos told me while he related the horrible massacres at Machecoul, a small open town, where the president of the district, Joubert, had his wrists sawn off and his head beaten to pieces by blows of a pitchfork; where the constitutional curé had been slowly torn to pieces by women; where the magistrate, Pognat, had been chopped up, and three hundred patriots, peaceable citizens, dragged to the edge of a ditch and shot without mercy. It was on the 10th of March, at the beginning of the war.

The tocsin was ringing in five hundred communities; and three days later Cathelineau, a coachman, Stofflet, a gamekeeper, Six-Sous, once a beggar — in fact, the whole breed—were surprising small detachments, which they massacred, robbing treasuries, carrying off arms, powder, and cannon, which no one was guarding, because no one expected anything of the sort, nor thought that Frenchmen could come and murder us unawares from behind while we were showing front to all Europe. All the horrors committed by the bandits at Chemillé, afterwards at Cholet, which this old soldier related to me in plain language, are not to be described; the abominations of the women towards the unfortunate wounded could not be even mentioned before decent people. He told me everything.

Afterwards, when tax-gatherers and gamekeepers had put things in a fair way, the "noble race of conquerors" rose: Delbée in Anjou, Bonchamp in Saint-Florent, De la Roche Saint-André in Pornic, Charette in the Marais, La Rochejaquelein and Lescure elsewhere. These men, at all events, were fighting in their own interest; when they spoke of the altar and the throne they meant themselves; it only meant, "We want our privileges back, the right of living in luxury from father to son at the expense of these wretches who are fighting for us." But the others—good heavens! is it possible they could be so dull? Ignorance is a sad thing. The worst of it was, that these defenders of God, when they set out to massacre townspeople, had their wives carrying sacks to put their plunder in behind them. When they attacked Nantes three months before, more than fifteen hundred women thought of nothing but the Rue des Orfèvres (Jewellers'-street). This was told me by

the citizen Detcytermos as he shrugged his shoulders. Such things are not credible now, I know it very well, but it is the truth nevertheless, such was the religious spirit in those days in holy La Vendée, that land of sacrifices.

The Convention, surprised at such horrors, had waited until the last moment before taking vengeance for them. It thought they could not last; but at last it was obliged to order the return of evil for evil, so we unfortunately were also obliged to burn and massacre, to show these people it was not so very difficult to become saints after their pattern, and only one thing was neccssary: that was, to forget that we were men—I do not say Christians—Christ has nothing in common with wild beasts.

While all this was going on we were blockaded in Mayence; the Army of the North had lost the battle of Nerwinden; Dumouriez had deserted to the Austrians, Cobourg was besieging Valenciennes; the Vendeans themselves had but one idea—that was to get possession of a good port where the English could easily disembark, and help them to establish tithes, the salt-tax, forced labour, the right of life and death, &c., &c., among us again. The lieutenant did not conceal from me that we had been guilty of very great blunders; instead of fighting in one large body, we had formed four armies, with four generals-in-chief, who did not agree together, and allowed themselves to be beaten in detail. Since the arrival of the Mayencers there remained but two, Rossignol and Canclaux, but that was too many; for in war there ought to be but one plan, which plan might be changed any day according to circumstances; but one head, therefore, was required,

which might profit by advice, but decide according to its own will. Therein lies an army's strength—the command of one and the obedience of all. Men of sense knew this very well, and the clockmaker Rossignol had more sense than Canclaux, for he told him, a fortnight before, at Saumur, to take the command of both armies, but to follow out his plans, which events showed to be the better; that was to move forward together and to drive the Vendeans into a corner between the Loire and the sea, and then not to let them slip through, but to fight a decisive battle, and to finish at one blow. Canclaux, a slave to routine, had taken the advice of his council of war to enter La Vendée at two points at once: the army of La Rochelle by Saumur, and the army of the coasts of Brest by Nantes. You will see what terrible disasters that caused us.

At first everything seemed going on well. Kléber's column, and that of Duboyet and Beyser, at one march's interval descended from Nantes into Lower Vendée, and every day we heard the orders of the Convention were carried out. There were actions at Pornic, Bourganeuf, Machecoul, Aigrefeuille, &c. Everywhere the Vendeans were routed, their villages burned, their bands dispersed or bayoneted. As they had declared that our capitulation with the Prussians was to their advantage, as every one of us had engaged not to serve for a year against the allies, we had violated the capitulation, and should all be shot if we fell into their hands; so we had no scruples ourselves, and the Mayence army treated the scoundrels with great severity. Thus all went on well in this direction.

Rossignol's army was also about to set out; his principal column, commanded by Santerre, was preparing

to march upon Cholet, the head-quarters of these banditti, in order to take them between two fires; it remained to be seen if they were silly enough to wait for the junction of the two armies instead of falling on them one after the other, as they had always done. We were soon to find this out, and you may think how anxious we were.

About this time I left the hospital, and I immediately applied for leave to join my battalion; but the Vendeans being in the habit of murdering all soldiers whom they met with alone, the adjutant-general, Flavigny, commandant de place at Angers, would not allow me to go by myself, and attached me to a company of artillery of the Eure and Loire about to join Santerre's column at Doué. That same day we crossed the Loire with other detachments, and we entered La Vendée by the rising ground of Erigné.

Santerre's army was bivouacked in the neighbourhood of Doué, on the road from Saumur to Cholet; it might consist of from eighteen to twenty thousand men, including the battalions raised at Orleans, the heroes at the price of five hundred livres raised in Paris, and the mounted gendarmerie, none of which had any great reputation for bravery; then came the battalions of the Sarthe and the Dordogne, the artillery, the foot gendarmes, and the 9th Hussars, formerly Hussars of Liberty, whose reputation, on the contrary, was very good; then the levies from all the adjacent departments —workmen, employés, peasants, most of them unarmed, many in sabots, with a stick on their shoulder, and a loaf of bread on the point. Provisions were always very difficult to obtain in these wild districts, sometimes nothing but sand, or else bushes and heather, for the

country people could easily hide themselves and their cattle.

Our detachment followed the road by Brissac, the Alleuds, and Ambillou; in the evening it reached the heights of Louresse, whence we could see the plain covered with fires, rows of horses at their pickets, and the little town of Doué lighted up as if there was a fête going on. It was very fine weather; the next day, September 17, we rejoined the main body on its march to Cholet. Now, what shall I say? I, a simple private, merely from seeing our line of march, could easily understand we were commanded by a brewer, who understood much better the management of a brewery than the command of an army. I was frightened beforehand, for I had seen already that though the Vendeans were brutes, they were no fools, and they knew very well how to fight. Fancy this terrible Santerre, who was sent by the Convention to overrun and conquer the whole of La Vendée at once, allowing his army to march, not in columns nor in divisions, nor even in platoons, but in open order, without skirmishers, no advanced guard, the artillery in front, then the cavalry and the infantry in a straggling line as far as you could see, so that if the head of the column was attacked the infantry could not avoid firing into the artillerymen; and in this order we crawled slowly along through hollow ways, narrow roads bordered with thick hedges and fruit-trees, stunted oaks and chestnuts, where we ran the risk of being cut off at any moment without ever being able to form. When I saw that I thought: "Michel, you will never see Margaret again. All those here now, if they have anything to leave, had better make their wills."

And I was angry with myself for having joined the artillery, for we led the march with neither muskets nor cartridges. The others, the carters and peasants who had been pressed for the transport of the guns and tumbrils, were not very happy either; I saw them looking about them all round us, and they trembled whenever anything stirred in the hedges or bushes.

As for Santerre, mounted on a big horse with his coat thrown open, his hat on the back of his head, and his long nose projecting forward, he galloped along the column, no doubt very vain of such a fine line of march; a column three leagues and a-half long, it was something grand; probably since the beginning of the world no general ever marched to meet an enemy with such a disposition of his troops.

I knew Santerre was a good patriot, and had shown himself as such in all that had occurred in Paris, but what a misfortune to have such a man for a general! When people like a man they think him fit for everything, and he who had done nothing but scour coppers all his life might be made at once first minister or general-in-chief. This, again, is one of the evils arising from ignorance.

Well, in this fashion we advanced to the attack of Cholet, and our column became longer and longer as the men and horses grew tired, through the roughness of the roads. The weather continued fine; nothing seemed likely to trouble us; so it went on for about five hours, and we had already passed several poverty-stricken villages without meeting a soul, when just as we reached the heights above Coron, all of a sudden a loud cry was heard all along the heather; the sound alone was enough to make one's hair stand on end;

and then a rolling fire was opened upon us from all sides at once, just as when a sluice is raised, and the river pours its water forth uncontrolled; at the same time the Vendeans fell upon us like wolves. They called out, "Surrender," and clung to our horses' bridles. The guns were their chief object, and never did I see such confusion and such desperation. The infantry, which was more than half a league in our rear, ought to have hurried up to our assistance, but the raw levies were in the centre, and the better part of the troops were farther off. The cavalry was quite ineffective in such an inclosed country; the mounted gendarmes went off at a gallop, under the pretence of rallying the fugitives; and from Coron to Vihiers you heard nothing but successive discharges of musketry, and the horrible uproar of our defeat increase.

A staff officer came and told us to get our cannon on the hills to the right and left of the road; unfortunately the Vendeans were so mixed up with us that we were fighting with our rammers and the butts of our muskets. One old man, whom I shall have all my life before my eyes, lean, toothless, but with a wrist of iron, had me by the throat, and called out something in Vendean which I could not understand; two more jumped down from the hedge, barefooted, breeches in rags, tow wigs surmounted by old shapeless hats, and fired into the crowd; wounded horses reared, chains rattled, and waggons ran against one another. The old man had forced me down on the gun; I drove my sword into him up to the hilt, and then as I rose I slashed a waggoner across the face, who was just cutting the traces of his horses. My only thought then was to do my duty; I took a strong hold of the leading horse and pricked him in the flanks,

which made him furious; the gun began to jump clear of the heap of dead and wounded. I could hardly see before me; those of my comrades who were left pushed the wheels along, and the gun was got up the ascent. Once there the Vendeans surrounded us a second time, and the battle began again more furiously than ever. We should all have been killed if the Hussars of Liberty, the brave 9th, had not come up and cut these wretches to pieces; they passed through them like a whirlwind.

Three more comrades fell; to load the piece the horses must have been taken out; our ammunition was down in the road, and our rammers, sponges, and handpikes were broken. When I saw this, and the Vendeans advancing again to get possession of the guns, I jumped on the horse and started off at a gallop. I paid no attention either to shots or shouting. The guns below were lost, and I could only save mine. A little farther on two battalions of the Sarthe—good soldiers they were—had formed a square and covered the retreat. I galloped up to them, and as I did so I heard the grape whistle past me, knocking up the dust. The Vendeans had succeeded in turning our own guns upon us. It was hard to be swept by one's own artillery.

The commandant of brigade, when he saw me come up with my gun, and covered with blood from head to foot, advanced more than twenty paces in front of the ranks.

"Your name, gunner?" said he, giving me his hand.

I replied—

"Michel Bastien, belonging to the Eure and Loire company."

The piece entered the square, but unfortunately we

had no ammunition, and could therefore make no use of it. I soon dismounted, quite surprised to find myself safe and sound. I picked up a musket and belt, and took the place of a fallen man. How glad I was to bite a cartridge again! Those who have never felt the excitement of being in action, when one sees one's comrades massacred, can form no idea of the pleasure of firing and then loading and firing again; one actually laughs with delight.

We were obliged to fall back, for the grape was thinning our ranks. At the first village in our rear we found a company of foot gendarmes and some fusiliers from the Dordogne in ambuscade in some huts among the ruins; the village was beginning to burn; the wads from the guns soon set a thatched roof on fire. We filed off to the left, and took up a position farther off at the foot of little knolls covered with trees, out of which rose the tower of another village church. We had to hold our position till six in the evening, to give time to the levies to rally in our rear. The Vendeans were equally unable to manœuvre the guns in such a thickly-wooded country, but they continued attacking us with undiminished ferocity.

At night they suddenly disappeared, we could not find out how or where. We awaited them for more than an hour, quite surprised to see nothing of them. Then just as the village clocks struck eight, the two battalions set out on their retreat, taking a road to the right. It was covered with killed and wounded, dying horses, fourgons, and carts broken in pieces. At intervals some battalions still held their ground in the open country; all that was left of really good soldiers had gone without orders to meet and rally the fugitives.

The raw levies with their sticks came in by all sorts of roads and paths; some of them came out of the quarries, of which there is no want in this country, and that night, the next day, and the day following, our cavalry was out looking for them everywhere.

We went back to Doué. The battalion of the Sarthe, with which I had fought, was quartered in the château of Foulon, whom the Parisians had hanged to a lantern at the beginning of the revolution. Fifteen gunners of the Eure and Loire company came back; many wounded, too, were brought in; but God knows how many the Vendeans shot that 17th of September, when we lost eighteen guns, all our ammunition, and thousands of good patriots. Such was our defeat at Coron. I have described it to you as I saw it, and I repeat, there is nothing in the world worse than people who think themselves capable of everything, and who have the boldness to put themselves at the head of most intricate affairs, which men a thousand times better instructed, and with much more courage, would be too modest to undertake.

Nor did we then know the worst; for two days later we heard why the Vendeans, instead of following up their pursuit, had disappeared at nightfall. It was to join another body and fall on another column, that of General Duhoux, who was marching from Angers upon Cholet, as ours was, in order to surround these brigands according to Canclaux's plan. They surprised the column at a place called Le Pont-Barré, and so overwhelmed it by numbers, that four thousand Republicans were left dead, the artillery, baggage, and all war material fell into their hands, and five hundred fathers of families belonging to Angers and the vicinity having

had their retreat cut off at the bridge, the Vendeans found an opportunity of carrying out their threats by shooting them to the last man.

After these bad news, as the Vendeans after their victories usually marched on some great town on the Loire to plunder it and fortify themselves in it, part of our troops were sent at once back to Saumur, and I went with them.

These brigands had destroyed our column at Coron on the 17th, and that of General Duhoux the 19th, at Beaulieu; we set off the 20th, furious at having been beaten by peasants ignorant of all tactics, and who killed three times as many men as we could.

As for me, I say it was entirely the fault of our generals; guess, then, what I felt when on our arrival at Saumur we heard the Mayence column had been defeated also and driven back upon Nantes! As we entered the town nothing else was heard. For, besides the lamentations of many families who had lost their support, people were terribly uneasy, for now that these scoundrels had the upper hand we could not see who was to check them. I always had some difficulty in believing bad news, and it seemed to me impossible that our old generals, such as Kléber and Dubayet, could ever have been routed by such a race as that was.

CHAPTER X.

AT Saumur we found all in confusion, we did not know where to go for a lodging; the churches of Saint-Jean, Notre-Dame-de-Nantilly, and Saint-Pierre were turned into hospitals for the wounded. They made haste to put the town in a state of defence; generals and the people's representatives laid the blame of our defeat on one another. Phélippeaux accused Rossignol of betraying the Republic; Rossignol charged Canclaux and Phélippeaux with having an understanding with the English. The soldiers' indignation against the five hundred livres heroes is not to be described, and sabre-cuts were exchanged every day by dozens.

At the same time we learned that the bad news we had just received was quite true; Kléber's column, after having driven the brigands back and ravaged their hiding places along the Sèvre, had nearly reached Cholet, hoping to make an end to the civil war at once; but the enemy having collected more than forty thousanp men, had surrounded the Mayence division at Torfou,

between Clisson and Mortagne, where the fiercest battle in the whole campaign was fought. Kléber, wounded by a shot in the beginning of the action, had calmly continued to give his orders until the end; his soldiers carried him on a litter made of their muskets, but a battalion of the Nièvre, entrusted with the defence of the artillery, having allowed itself to be taken in flank, all our guns fell into the hands of the Vendeans; they were then obliged to fight their way back through these savages, but the retreat was made in good order notwithstanding the impetuosity of the Royalists, who for six leagues had not been able to make any impression upon one single battalion. The Mayence division halted at Clisson and took up a good position behind the Sèvre, where the Vendeans dared not attack them. So it was after all an honourable retreat before very superior forces, but still it was a retreat; the Vendeans remained masters of the field of battle, and they were justified in saying—

"We have remained masters at home in spite of you!"

And we had nothing to say in reply.

This is what we were told.

The idea that Lisbeth, Marescot, and little Cassius were in this skirmish did not make me see things in a pleasanter light; I now knew too well these good Christians of La Vendée not to be aware that if my sister's cart should happen to stick fast anywhere the whole brood would be cut to pieces without mercy. This idea weighed upon my mind.

I always drew my rations with the battalion of the Sarthe, as my comrades; more than one was missing at roll-call who never required his, but this could not

last long, and order being somewhat re-established in the place, I got my route at last after having asked for it twenty times; it was for Angers, where the company of artillery, Paris and Vosges, had come to be formed anew at the end of September. I hardly expected to meet Jean-Baptiste Sôme, Marc Divès, and other friends of Landau, Worms, Spires, and Mayence again. It is well said of the soldier that he lives like a bird on a branch; to-day, comrade, we shake hands, we eat, drink, and sleep together, we are like old and tried friends; and to-morrow if a shower of grape comes I do not even know where your body is lying, if in a grave with ten or fifteen others, or if it be a prey to the foxes. Yes, it is sad enough.

Well, once out of Saumur I cut a stick out of the nearest hedge and took the road to Angers. It was still fine weather, but autumn was drawing near and the leaves began to fall. At different points national guards mounted guard on the bridges across the river; the villagers were uneasy, they had lost confidence in the levies en masse, and with good reason; they ought at least to have been armed with muskets instead of pikes; the Vendeans were along the road in one little village. I saw, however, something which pleased me; it was several notices on the closed door of a church, first the Convention's decree that in future the army should be commanded by only one general, and then its proclamation to the army:—

"Soldiers of liberty, the brigands of La Vendée must be exterminated before the end of October. The welfare of the country requires it, the impatience of the French people commands it. Your courage ought to accomplish it."

And the last warning from the representatives of the people assembled at Saumur to the rebels:—

"Nobles and priests, in the name of the God of Peace and Goodness, excite you to murder and plunder. What would your leaders have? Royalty, slavery! all the old abuses which formerly weighed so heavily on our heads. They want tithes, taxes on salt, manorial privileges, forced labour, and game laws. They seek to bind you again to the soil, like the ox which draws your ploughshare. We, on the contrary, what do we seek? We desire all men to be equal, to be as free as the air they breathe," &c.

All that did some good, especially the order of the Convention to exterminate La Vendée before the end of the month. Three-fourths of mankind have no confidence in themselves when the difficult moment arrives; some one must inspire them if things are to go on well.

The 3rd of October, early in the morning, I entered the old town of Angers; it was full of troops ready to join the Fontenay division, which was advancing from Bressuire, in the heart of La Vendée. I was a whole hour looking for my company, which I found quartered in an old building. I had seen the colours of the 13th hanging over the door, but I did not recollect the figures, and I was just going to leave, thinking I had made a mistake, when Lieutenant René Belaton, who was passing by, called out to me—

"What, Bastien, is that you? Where do you come from? They said you were bound to the next world."

I told him I came from Saumur, and that I had been attached to the artillery company of the Eure and

Loire. Many others stood by, and I recognised several old soldiers, who laughed and said—

"So there's Bastien—he is not dead yet."

They shook hands with me, and almost directly I saw old Sôme coming, looking about him; they had already heard that Michel Bastien was below; when he saw me he held out his arms without saying a word, and I saw what a good old friend he was.

"Ah," said he, as he pressed me to his heart, "I am glad to find you again, Michel!"

We were both affected; the others were in the way, so I said to Sôme—

"Let us go to Maître Adam's wine-shop opposite."

And there we went and talked alone at our ease. Many soldiers and bourgeois frequented this tavern; and there, with our elbows on the table opposite one another, and drinking a red wine of the country which was very good, and eating a crust of bread, the first thing I asked him was if my sister, Marescot, and little Cassius were still alive—if they had escaped the Torfou disaster?

"Be easy, Michel," said he; "I saw them in their cart in the middle of Dubayet's column, retreating on Nantes; they were all safe and sound. I had even a few moments' talk with Lisbeth as I marched by the cart; she had a musket and a sabre near in the straw, and all she wanted to defend herself. I should have quite as much reliance on her in the ranks as Marescot; she is a girl who would not be afraid of two Vendéennes!"

He laughed, and I was very well satisfied to hear such good news; that gave me patience to hear the rest.

Sôme told me the battalion of the Nièvre was the cause of all the disaster, for at the beginning of the action we had the best of it, and the column pressing the enemy back, this battalion, instead of remaining at its post to support the guns, had followed the main body; that then the Royalists had taken the gunners in the rear and cut them to pieces; that Marc Divès, big Mathis, from the Quatre-Vents, Jean Rat, and five or six others of our acquaintance were of the number, and since then the company had heard nothing whatever of them; Sôme himself had received two bayonet thrusts, but fortunately, seeing our dragoons coming up, the Vendeans hurried the guns away without killing the wounded as they usually did, and so many others belonging to the company might have a chance of turning up again. His first bayonet wound was in the right hand, the second in the arm; but he would not report himself wounded, and now he was doing well.

His hand was still bandaged up, but it did not hinder his holding his glass.

We stayed there till the evening retreat was sounded, and then we returned to barracks and went to bed. The company was only thirty-five strong, but it only requires six to handle a small gun; they thought they could fill up our number at Bressuire, and as marching orders had come, we set out the next day but one, October the 5th, 1793.

We had cavalry and infantry with us, and waggoners too, who required plenty of looking after, though they did wear the bonnet rouge with enormous cockades, for they were always looking out for an opportunity to take their horses out and decamp in the night. It was our

duty to watch them; for the moment we had nothing else to do.

I was already acquainted with most of the places we passed. General Duhoux's column had been defeated in the vicinity, and every evening, as soon as the sun went down, we could hear all over these vast moors wolves and foxes on our right and left in the depths of the thickets dragging about and fighting over the dead. The long red lines in the sky, the high and dark brushwood, the cries of wild beasts, and the church bells in the villages answering one another in the silent night made us feel sad enough. Often did I then call my own home to mind; and the preachings of the refractory priests exciting men to fight instead of trying to keep them at peace; and Chauvel's warnings at our club not to trust to war; and Valentine's atrocious folly, who wanted to hang all patriots in honour of the Comte d'Artois, the man after God's own heart; and all the horrors which had brought us where we were now. Are men, then, made to become food for vermin? Is such the Christian religion? and Christ Himself, what would He have said of these dreadful barbarities caused by the pride and avarice of priests and nobles calling themselves the chosen of His religion? Was it for that He came into the world?

Sometimes, too, in the evening whole villages were deserted at our approach; men, women, old people, children, all disappeared with their oxen, cows, and goats; we could see them a long way off moving away through the thorns and fern brakes in the last rays of the sun; and we nearly always found the wells filled up with dead bodies and stones above them. It was a scene of slaughter. Of course we set their wretched

hovels on fire. The column continued its march, and all night long we could see the flames rising in the sky, which was filled with smoke for more than a league, especially when the fire caught the dry grass and trees round about.

At daybreak we halted; we cooked our rations, and posted sentries on the heights all round. We were obliged to be always on our guard, for our most dangerous enemies watched us closely, and followed us step by step. They had, however, no opportunity of making an attack upon us on our march. After leaving Doué, Montreuil, and Thouars, we arrived at Bressuire the 9th of October, at the same time that the Saumur and Fontenay columns, which had effected their junction the evening before, set off for Châtillon.

The general of division, Chalbos, commanded in chief; Westermann was at the head of the Burgundian chasseurs, called the Côte d'Or, and of a squadron of the Egalité hussars. This man Westermann was a native of Molshiem, near my own home, and had a great reputation for courage, and even ferocity; no other general was so well acquainted with La Vendée as he; some months previously in these same districts he had burned the châteaux of Lescure and La Rochejaquelein, and villages, churches, and convents without number; we saw the ruins of them all around us.

As our company came in just as the others were marching off, and was very tired and incomplete, we were detailed to attend to despatching the ammunition which was to follow the column. It seemed the enemy was not distant, for the army began its march about nine in the morning, and the last detachments were still filing through the streets at the double when

the guns began to fire; we worked hard, loading carts full of straw with balls, shells, and grape, which were escorted by the ci-devant Rosenthal chasseurs, hurrying on the drivers and flogging the horses.

When about midday the cannonade became more sustained, how we cursed with all our hearts the duty which kept us confined in a park of artillery while our comrades were engaged! Father Sôme ground his teeth; I noticed him moving about pale with rage; instead of handing us the balls, he seemed to wish to throw them at our heads. The lieutenant of the company, a very young man, kept his back turned to us at the door, between the palisades, and whistled; every cart that left he gave the horses a cut with a whip, which made them gallop for the first hundred yards in spite of their load.

It was too disgusting for volunteers to have such duties to perform, and those of my own time, when they now see this magnificent military train, their excellent waggons as strong as iron can make them, and their magnificent powerful horses in superb condition, these brave squarely-built soldiers, with their overalls strapped with leather, jackets of good cloth, neat shako, and the good arrangement in the tumbrils, the fuses of every shell or bomb well protected from rain till wanted—when we see all that, old soldiers like myself are forced to confess it is rather different to what it was in our time, and if taxes had not increased too much, we should be obliged to acknowledge that our grandchildren have profited by our experience, and made great progress in the art of war; but the question of taxation spoils everything, and if I had not to bring this history to an end, I should like to say a word or two more on the

subject; however, let us get on now with our story, and we will talk about the taxes by-and-by.

While we were passing cannon-balls from hand to hand, the greater part of the population of Bressuire had run out of the town and gained the high ground to see the distant battle. We heard them say, as they came back—

"The affair is at the wood of the Moulin-des-Chèvres."

And others said—

"They are fighting at Aubiers."

Sometimes there was a very great noise. They thought it was something more than the sound of cannon; but the wood of Moulin-des-Chèvres being more than two leagues distant, it was only imagination, as is often the case under similar circumstances.

About four the first carts which we had sent off loaded with ammunition came back filled with wounded—grenadiers, chasseurs, hussars, cannoneers, mixed together; heads bandaged, arms in slings, legs broken, the straw drenched in blood; and they took them out—they took them out, and laid them down all along the street in the open air. The doctors, surgeons, and apothecaries, in their white aprons, their cases of instruments and linen bandages under their arms, were soon on the spot and kneeling by the wounded, while the crowd looked on and shuddered. You might hear a cry or two, and then many would run away! Some brave women came and helped, litters passed up the street, all the houses were thrown open. The nearest was attended to first, and then the next, and the next. Every one offered his bed, his linen, all that he had. When we see people so kind to the wounded, the idea naturally occurs to us that such

kindness would not be necessary if they had the good sense to agree among themselves and resolutely oppose war with all their might. Unfortunately, this was not possible with the Vendeans; these poor creatures did not even know that they were fighting to benefit traitors who wanted to put their country in the hands of the English, and who had an understanding with the Prussians, of whom they claimed the fulfilment of the terms of our capitulation. They knew nothing, and tried to support servitude in opposition to the wise and just laws voted by the representatives of the nation. We were therefore obliged utterly to destroy or exterminate this race; but its courage cannot be disputed, and all our resources were not more than sufficient to bring the struggle to a successful issue.

At five the brigadier-general Chabot was brought in on a litter alone by two grenadiers. He was already dead. I saw him go by. He had a ball behind the ear. They said he cried, "Vive la République!" as he fell; but when I saw that dark hole, nearly as large as my hand, I can hardly believe it, and I think some of his friends called out for him, knowing that is the last thought of a true patriot.

About six the cannonade ceased, and carts, fourgons, and empty tumbrils blocked up the streets and roads It began to grow dark, the townspeople lighted up the front of their houses with torches, and the surgeons went on extracting balls, amputating arms and legs, without allowing themselves to be disturbed by the cries, talking, or movement of the crowd. I remember, just as night set in, a hussar, an old fellow with a long grey moustache, rode up. He did not seem to be wounded. As the crowd prevented his advance, he

stopped where the artillery was parked, and our lieutenant asked him if the battle was over.

"Yes," said he, "the brigands have been retreating for the last two hours; one column is in pursuit of them towards Neuillé on the right; the village is on fire; Westermann follows them up on the left on the road to Châtillon. He ought to be there by this time."

The man talked quietly enough, but when he tried to dismount we saw he was wounded in the belly. He sank down against the palisades at full length, and closed his eyes. The lieutenant called out to one of the men to fetch a surgeon, but as the hussar grew stiff and his eyes opened again, he saw the brave fellow was dead, and called the gunner back again.

About the same time we heard at a distance the air of the "Marseillaise." The representatives Chaudieu and Bellegarde were returning, escorted by a squadron of ci-devant Rosenthal chasseurs. Then rose the cry of "Vive la République!" all through the town. The representatives went to the Mairie to issue their proclamation, with the municipal officers of the district, but I had not time to hear it read, for the next day, October the 10th, at daybreak, we had the order to rejoin the column. They had recovered the guns from the Vendeans, and so now we were to enter on our regular service again.

By ill-luck, when we reached the village of Beaulieu we were again put in requisition to bring in the wounded and bury the dead. All the country people had run away, their villages were on fire, and we could not pass on and leave poor wretches still breathing in the brushwood, so we were obliged to set to work. I

will not describe it to you—it is too horrible; and besides, I should never get to an end if I gave you a detailed account of everything that happened in such a campaign.

All the 10th we did nothing but dig large graves, six or seven feet deep, in which the dead were laid in rows one by the side of the other.

The wounded were put into carts, which were despatched to Bressuire. Other detachments assisted us. The heights were thoroughly searched all round, but how could we see everything in this country of moor and fern-brakes? We might have searched for a week or longer, and we were anxious to join the main body. There we were, when at night a loud noise in the direction of Châtillon drew our attention. It was a confused, dull sound. We looked along the road, and there was our whole army running away; no one in pursuit, but all regiments, foot and horse, hurrying on across the fields, all mixed up together like a flock of sheep. Fancy our astonishment! Their leaders in vain tried to stop them; they would not listen to them. This crowd of men invaded not only the village, but the whole country round; and from their exclamations we gathered that the Vendeans had surprised them at Châtillon while the greater part of them were running about the country looking for hay, straw, and provisions, and they had all run away, leaving their guns, ammunition, and baggage behind.

Happily we had already cooked and eaten our suppers, for after this column's arrival there was nothing to be found to eat. The runaways wanted to go on to Bressuire, but Westermann covered the retreat with his hussars and a battalion of grenadiers of the Convention.

Their leaders went among them, and finished by making them understand what a disgrace it would be to retreat any farther, and leaving the rear-guard to its fate; and that they ought to try and get into some sort of order, and put themselves in a situation to defend themselves if attacked. Roll-call began; companies, battalions, and squadrons were reorganised, and they stood to their arms. This took up about two hours.

What surprised us the most was not seeing the rear-guard arrive. We looked out; we listened; the sentries had orders to give the alarm at the slightest movement. The officers consulted together at the bivouac fires in front of the village. Nothing stirred, when suddenly, about one in the morning, file and platoon firing was heard in the direction of Châtillon. It never ceased—even the sky became red, and we knew that Châtillon was on fire. Then the fugitives of an hour before put themselves forward to cry out, "Advance! advance!" but their leaders were in no hurry to lead them under fire. Some chasseurs were sent out as scouts, and at daybreak we heard of the fearful massacre of Vendeans at Châtillon. Westermann, ashamed of having been driven back so easily to Bressuire by a mob of peasants, reflected that if the Royalists did not follow up their success it was because they were drinking themselves stupid in the cellars of the houses, as they usually did. He therefore took a hundred grenadier volunteers up behind his troopers, formerly called Chartres Hussars, ordering them only to use their sabres and bayonets. He entered Châtillon about midnight, and from that time till four in the morning, he, his hussars, and his grenadiers had done nothing but

kill, cut down, massacre, and burn these drunken wretches, men and women, lying about in the houses and streets among staved-in casks and broken pitchers, without strength to move, without courage to resist—dead drunk, in fact. Those who possessed a glimmer of reason took it into their heads that another column of Republicans coming from Nantes, Luçon, or elsewhere was attacking them. They began firing on one another from the windows and doors without looking or listening to any one, so that blood, brandy, and wine flowed together down the gutters while the houses burned and the ruins fell in on their own heads.

This is what drunkenness and folly can bring men to.

It was about nine when we saw this spectacle, one I shall never forget.

The whole column found its guns and ammunition in the same place; the rascals had only plundered the baggage. A long convoy of powder reached along the road from Châtillon to Bressuire, and as the waggoners had made their escape, it fell again upon us to take charge of it. We dared not pass the main street, full of burning timber and ashes and sparks, which the least draught of air blew off the roofs in showers, so we were obliged to go round these ruins to gain the Châtillon road. When some distance off, as we marched along, I looked back two or three times and saw the street as black as a chimney, with heaps of people, dead and living, on the ground, among the rubbish, men and women. I don't know exactly, but some of them seemed to me to move still, and then there came a smell of burning which made my heart sick.

What a frightful thing is civil war! Such reminiscences as these make one take a dislike to the whole

human race; one feels ashamed of being a man, but one knows that it is the interests of certain monsters, happily very rare, and growing fewer every day, which alone cause such disasters, while the masses, with a little instruction, are good, charitable, and ready rather to help than injure one another.

Westermann and his hussars remained in the neighbourhood of Châtillon to rest after the massacre; the remainder of the column pursued its march in the direction of Cholet. We marched with the grenadiers of the Convention, all old soldiers, formerly gendarmes or Gardes Françaises; our chief of brigade was General Bard; the people's representative, Fayau, who joined us. We could not advance very quickly in such an inclosed country; we knew that Stofflet, Durivault, and Beauvalier, three of the principal Vendean chiefs, were on the look-out for us at every dangerous pass; we were obliged to keep together, that we might not experience such a rout as Santerre did at Coron.

The second day we heard from morning till night a heavy cannonade on our left; the wind came in that direction. It was like a dull murmuring sound at a distance; the officers stopped, and pointing to the endless fern-brakes, said—

"The Luçon column has effected its junction with the Montaigu; there is fighting going on there."

We might have marched in that direction if we had dared break up into detachments, and could have dragged the guns along the paths, but we were too much afraid of falling into an ambuscade. But the next day, as we passed the small town of Maulévrier, we heard that the new general-in-chief, the sans-culotte, Léchelle, had arrived some time before; that he had

alreadv gained two victories, and routed the brigands; and as we were not more than three leagues from Cholet, where the firing was going on, all the light troops were pushed forward—the battalion of Convention Grenadiers, the ex-Rosenthal Chasseurs—all, in fact, who could move fast; and we, in charge of our long convoy of powder and baggage, were left in the rear to get along as we could.

It might be eleven or twelve. We were very indignant, but indignation does not avail much in broken-up roads, and all the whips in the world and curses to boot will not help you one step forward; besides being left in the rear we ran the risk of being cut off; and it was an extraordinary piece of good fortune that in these three leagues the spies who swarmed in this country never gave the information that a Republican convoy was on the road with only two companies of fusiliers to escort it. Probably they were elsewhere; they all were ready to assist one another, and when fighting was going on anywhere, you might march for leagues without meeting a soul.

At last, about six, when we reached a small height, we saw on our left the town of Cholet, which follows the line of road for nearly half a league. It is, properly speaking, a large market town, full of traders, merchants, and manufacturers, and even then Cholet was considered one of the good commercial and patriotic towns in La Vendée. Farther on we saw our army, with their guns in position on the heights. They had ceased firing; the cavalry was scouring the plain, and the brigands were routed.

Our only satisfaction was to see, three hundred paces distant on the moor, a Mayence battalion with grounded

arms and two or three others farther off in reserve; they wore the same uniform as all the volunteer battalions, but we recognised them, as we should our own relations, by their way of standing, looking, and leaning about, and then by their long beards, old rags, and torn colours. I felt my heart beat, and old Father Sôme said through his teeth—

"There are our own people; we shall not be sent to the rear again now."

The pleasure of seeing my old companions in arms again, and the thought that my sister Lisbeth, Cassius, and Marescot could not be far away, quite troubled my eyesight. I could hear the "Marseillaise" sung, the horses neigh, and though the fight was over, from time to time I heard a cannon-shot. The sky was streaked with long lines of red and gold, the sun had disappeared; but general officers on horseback by threes, sixes, and tens, with their immense cocked hats, hussars with their pointed red, yellow, or black shakos; little carts covered with an awning, every one of which I thought must be ours, lines of bayonets, and then the great field of battle itself; on our left the town, with its numerous chimneys and pointed gables—all that was to be seen as the smoke cleared away. We advanced gently in the rear of this great army. All our divisions were at last assembled together; so far for once we had succeeded! and as we kept moving on thus, a mounted officer galloped up and ordered us to halt. It was our old commandant Jordy, become chief of brigade; when they recognised him, six or seven of the mountain battalion called out, "Health, commandant! health and fraternity!"

Then he recognised us and said—

"What, old comrades! where the devil do you come from now?"

"We have been on detachment," I answered; "we are returning from the field hospital, and we want to join our battalion again if it is possible."

"Well, I will see about it; you belong to the 13th Light Infantry?"

"Yes, general, Paris and Vosges."

He was off again, and all we dreaded was to be left in charge of this convoy; but almost immediately afterwards some men came to relieve us. As we were without orders, our lieutenant, Rochette, was drawing us up into ranks to rejoin our battalion, when the general galloped up again and ordered us to follow him. We marched down the descent, and about a hundred paces farther on in front of Cholet we found six four-pounders and two eight-pounders near a small bridge; about thirty artillerymen of the German Legion were in charge of them; their company had lost many men at Tiffauges, ours filled it up again and passed under the orders of General Marceau, who was deficient in artillerymen; he came himself to see us, and I saw him then for the first time in his hussar uniform, with handsome pale dark face and round full chin, like a young girl; he wore lead twisted into his lovelocks on each side of his face, and when he heard we had been at Mayence, he said, as he looked at us good-humouredly—

"Ah, ha, I see we shall not waste our gunpowder."

Those are things which flatter a soldier, and that meant we had some good marksmen among us, and so we had; Father Sôme, Jacob Haag, and myself, we could well flatter ourselves we were. It requires no

great amount of skill to take aim, but I shall always remember his words, for every one likes to have justice done to his talents and his merits.

That same evening I went to see my sister at the 13th demi-brigade of light infantry; it was encamped near a wooden bridge about two gunshots from our bivouac. As soon as supper was over, without saying a word to any one, I set off running; I had not even told old Sôme, who followed me; and when I arrived at the canteen under the old canvas tent hanging from the branches of a chestnut-tree, when I saw Lisbeth and her little Cassius on her arm, with the Parisians sitting round the fire smoking their pipes and discussing political news as usual, then I thought I saw my whole family back again, and I could hardly find strength to call out—

"Here I am. Vive la République!"

I was quite beside myself. I felt I could laugh and cry all at once. The Parisians called out—

"Ah, Michel, Michel is come back. Kiss him, citoyenne—it is he."

My sister, with the boy on her shoulder, and one arm round my neck, cried with pleasure. I felt she loved me very much; after all, she was a good sister, and I said to myself—

"We were brought up together; if I had been killed she would have had no one from our village near her."

"Ah," said she, "before I thought you were dead I did not feel we were such near relations."

My brother-in-law also came and embraced me; and when Sôme came in, the same cries began again. It is only old comrades who can fraternise together, those

whom we have seen near us in misery and in danger. The new ones are of small account.

We would have stayed there all night, but the retreat was sounded; we parted, therefore, well satisfied at having seen one another again, and promising to return the next day and have our soup together. No one then thought that the next day would see a battle fought. The retreating Vendeans rallied at Beaupréau; we kept them safe between us and the Loire; they had no chance of escape, and we were not obliged to attack them immediately. We expected, therefore, to have at least twenty-four hours' rest. I never slept better than I did that night on the ground, with my old cloak for a blanket, my knapsack for a pillow, with a contented mind, and dreaming of Lisbeth's good soup, which was simmering from four in the morning till nine, so that the spoon would stand upright in it, and then the brother-in-law's can, which was passed round, and each man wiped his moustache and raised it to his lips—fine dreams when campaigning! But affairs were about to turn out different to what I expected. All night reconnoitring parties brought information to head-quarters that the brigands were fortifying themselves at Beaupréau, and that they intended to await us in that position. General Léchelle believed it, but Kléber thought very rightly that these men were not too well pleased to have the Loire in their rear, for they understood the danger of their position in case of defeat well enough, and they would be sure to attempt to cut their way through us at any price to get back into the Bocage again, and recommence a war of surprises and ambuscades. This was plain common sense; we could not suppose the enemy any more

foolish than ourselves; in the morning, therefore, after a council of war had met, battalions and squadrons began to manœuvre and to take up a position in line of battle on the moor in front of Cholet..

I ought not to forget one truly great event which happened at that moment. As the rappel was beaten, hussars galloped through the bivouacs and distributed to every company and every detachment the Convention's last bulletin, and calling out—

"Address to the army of the West!"

The first comer, officer or soldier, who picked up the bulletin, began to read it to his comrades in a circle round him—

"REPUBLICANS!

"Rebellious Lyons is conquered; the army of the Republic has just made its entry in triumph. At this moment it is cutting all traitors to pieces; not one of those vile and cruel satellites of despotism shall escape; and you, too brave soldiers, you will also gain a victory. La Vendée has wearied the Republic long enough. March, strike, make an end of it! All our enemies ought to fall at the same time, each army conquer. Will you be the last to gather laurels—deserve the glory of having exterminated the rebels and saved the country? Treason has no time to act when opposed to courage and impetuosity. Rush upon these senseless and ferocious hordes! crush them, and let each man of you say—'To-day I annihilate La Vendée!' and La Vendée is conquered."

Imagine the enthusiasm of the army after hearing this. The cries of "Vive la République!" which spread over the vast plain where thousands of bayonets were marching, guns carried along at a gallop, the shaking

of hands, old hats hoisted up at the end of the muskets —in fact, enthusiasm gone mad. Yes, even the horses on such occasions become excited; they rear, they neigh, they want to fight. It is extraordinary: war-like enthusiasm is present everywhere, even among animals. When one thinks of that it makes one shudder. God grant that in future wars our cause may be as just and as holy as that of the Republic against despotism, and then no one can reproach us.

At last, after this great excitement, which had lasted more than an hour, we calmed down again. They came and told us the Vendeans were approaching in three columns; they therefore intended to attack us in regular line of battle, and that was all we wanted.

Léchelle, who was no general, had sometimes the sense to obey while he affected to command, and thus he managed to gain a victory sometimes; but when through vanity he took the chief command on himself, everything was lost beforehand. This time, according to Kléber's plan, the right wing, in which I was, rested on the rising ground, the left wing on a small wood, and the centre on the town, but well in advance of it. The Mayence division was in reserve, the artillery in the ranks, but masked by the first line.

Westermann had not yet arrived from Châtillon with his hussars; he only came up at four, having marched as soon as he heard the cannon.

In this position we awaited what was to come.

From time to time cries of "Vive la République!" began again, sometimes from one point, sometimes from another, and came nearer and nearer; it was the brigades saluting their generals as they followed along the line of battle, followed by their staffs; and then all

was quiet again. We looked along the white high road for a long way; time passed, and we began to grow impatient. We wanted to move forward, when all at once the head of the first Vendean column came in sight.

From the place where we were we could see at the edge of the moor on the left of the road on the other side of a wood a small church tower, and all round it black masses of men, who eddied and closed up, and then opened out again like a swarm of bees.

Some prisoners whom we took the next day on our march told us that the Vendeans went to prayers at the church of Saint-Léger before going into action with us. The church steps were covered with men on their knees, bells were rung, and the refractory priest, Bernier, who afterwards became one of the emperor's good friends, promised a victory to these poor creatures, and the kingdom of heaven for all who died for Louis XVII. They all believed what he said. They were more than forty thousand without counting women, old men, and children, which must have considerably increased their confidence in themselves.

I can only say now that at the moment this immense crowd began to move gently upon us in three dense columns there was such a silence in our ranks that one would have thought we did not exist. Every one looked forward; the mounted officers, standing up in their stirrups, gazed at them also. The weather was fine, and their march lasted a long time. The Royalist column, which was marching upon our division, when it reached a small wood disappeared for an instant; but the two first, which were much stronger, continued to advance, quickening their step, on our left wing.

We, who were nearly half a league distant, could hear the clamour of these people, who were praying as if they were in a procession, and sometimes cries of "Vive le roi! vive le roi!" rose above the tumult. The state of exultation in which these creatures were made one feel cold. Then the cannon roared, musketry, the attack at the point of the bayonet, shouts, and the rolling of file-firing, all began at once.

Our division on the left, about two thousand five hundred strong, had from fifteen to twenty thousand of them on it at once. It fell back; the Vendeans rushed forward, the sweeping showers of grape mowed them down by hundreds, but they always returned to the charge, and their loud shouts of "Vive le roi!" began again.

I have often heard this battle talked about for the last fifty years; some said, "The Vendeans were quite right in attacking in column, it was more like soldiers than extending themselves as skirmishers; their general, Bonchamp, showed talent in making them execute that grand manœuvre." Others replied, "It was the greatest folly they could have committed; when they tried to manœuvre they had already lost the battle; those massive columns could not fall back; they must advance, and the grape cut them to pieces as they did so; the Vendeans found that out."

All these remarks are incorrect. What was the Vendeans' object? They wanted to return to their Bocage; they tried to make a break in our ranks through which their women, old men, and children could pass; that was their grand manœuvre; to make such a gap I know no other means than by a close column, for to spread themselves out as skirmishers in front of an army

drawn up in line of battle on a plain would have left them to have been very soon cut up by the cavalry; they therefore tried to break through our line, and they made their first attempt on our left. Our wing gave way before the tremendous fury and weight of numbers of these men, who were determined at any cost to get through. But then the first division of the Mayence troops came up and fell into line; on our side not a shot had yet been fired, the storm was all on one side, the rolling fire of the musketry, and the cannonade covered the heather with smoke as far as we could see. But all at once the body of brigands who had been unable to force our left rushed upon the centre with the same yells, and the centre, commanded by Chalbos, was nearly forced back; the second Mayence division had but just time to support it.

At that moment the third column, which had just passed through the wood, appeared in front of us, half a gunshot distant, as numerous as the others; and this was what I think the most frightful sight I ever saw—peasants, strong young fellows, with their long hair, fathers of families, old men with their white hair, large broad-brimmed hats, chaplets hanging from their necks, red waistcoats covered with medals, with the heart of Jesus embroidered on their jackets, and above the crowd two or three leaders on horseback in hats with white plumes; all this confused crowd, which is called a column, with ten, twenty, or thirty men in front, and several hundreds deep, pell-mell, shouting, "Vive le roi!" some of them praying in Latin, perhaps sacristans or curés, I cannot say; with fleurs-de-lis at the end of two or three long poles; all that, call it what you will, began to roll towards us.

At the same time Marceau and ten other field officers passed behind the ranks, calling out—

"Let them come; let them come; wait for the word of command!"

We stood there, our pieces loaded, matches blown, I and the other marksmen, with the screw of the breech in our hands; we waited for the word.

"Vive le roi!" "Pater noster!" "Vive le roi!" "Ave Maria!" "Pray for us!" "Forward, forward!" Such were the horrible cries which we heard from twenty thousand throats mingled with the clatter of their sabots.

The first battalion firing thundered along our line, but under cover of the thick smoke the others kept on advancing, so that in a moment the ranks which covered us opened. The Vendeans were three hundred paces distant, and when our officers gave the command to fire, our eight pieces loaded with grape opened a lane before us.

God knows how many of these wretched Vendeans fell, one over the other in files, all massacred and dashed to pieces; their massive column was checked by it for a second; astonishment and horror had seized these poor devils, who knew nothing but skirmishing; they saw that attacking in column was quite a different thing, and that demoralised them. But we had no time to reload, for these men were Frenchmen; they recovered themselves in a moment and hurried on over their dead. Our line was still open, and seeing at two hundred paces this mob of furious peasants coming to the attack with the bayonet, I thought this time it must be all over, for it was of no use thinking of defending ourselves with rammers and handspikes against such a crowd.

Fortunately a squadron of the 7th Chasseurs came up and took them in flank, and we then had a horrible butchery taking place before us to cover us. Fancy how we hurried in loading and priming: it was done in an instant; and as the chasseurs retired to unmask us, a second volley of grape routed the others so effectually that their column broke up like straw. One of their leaders galloped about, shouted at them, and tried to stop their flight; we wanted at that moment one decisive charge; if Westermann had been there the affair would have been decided, but he had not come up yet, and all we could do was to load again while that chief, a tall, thin man, succeeded in halting his men and getting them into some sort of form in the middle of the moor and the brushwood.

Then the whole Royalist mass fell upon us; the artillery of the Mayence division on the left wing had done even more execution among them than had ours; all the fugitives from the two other columns had rallied to that in our front and brought their artillery up with them. Balls and grape soon began to be poured upon us, and we all felt we were going to sustain the Vendeans' last great effort; Kléber at a distance foreseeing their object, galloped up and threw himself into our division.

I can see him ride up now with the feathers in his hat blown back by the wind, the broad facings of the Republican uniform thrown back open across his wide chest, his large, full face quivering with enthusiasm; I can hear him now call out to us quite gaily, as his horse reared up—

"That will do, my friends! The brigands shall not get through. We will drive them back into the Loire;

they shall never see their Boeage again. Vive la République!"

And we answered him with a thousand cries of "Vive la République!" He laughed, and the younger officers behind him laughed too, but as one laughs when balls are roaring and bullets whistling, and when at every moment some one falls back out of the ranks to the right or the left, one laughs all the same, but one would rather hear the charge beaten and the order given to advance than remain in the same place. Kléber seemed in as good humour as a true Alsatian at a wedding. The evening before Marceau had gone to visit him in his tent; he returned his visit in a far finer room surrounded by bayonets. When we saw them shake hands and pay one another compliments with such good humour, surrounded by other mounted officers, we said—

"All right; we have the best of it; there is nothing to fear."

A real general knows very well what he is about. Every soldier has his eye always on him, far or near; he gains or loses confidence from his expression of countenance, as a sick man does from his doctor. Real generals are scarce enough.

At that moment the Vendeans began to move forward; and I remember that this strong column which united nearly all that was left of the two others, and that all their principal leaders, Delbée, Bonchamp, La Rochejaquelein, and Stofflet, were encouraging them, that a powerful artillery supported them. I remember they marched forward in silence; the poor creatures neither shouted nor prayed, they were passing over such heaps of dead and wounded; despair had seized them.

When they received our discharge they were thrown into disorder, and halted much farther off than the first time; they began firing both cannon and musketry, but they did not dare advance. This lasted from five until six, and the chief who led them having disappeared, they broke in disorder and ran.

We saw it was over when they failed at one moment to return our fire, then the charge was beaten, and we sprang forward, singing the Marseillaise:—

> "Allons, enfans de la patrie,
> Le jour de gloire est arrivé."

I cannot describe our joy and enthusiasm. Westermann, too, came up just then, furious at having missed the battle; it was he who dispersed the rest of these wretches, driving them before him with his hussars like a wolf. It was quite dark; we thought it was all over, but a little farther off the fight began again, a fight on the part of the bravest and most desperate, who came to carry off their dead and wounded chiefs, who had been left behind when they first fell back! It was a horrible carnage; they were not more than three or four hundred at most, and they came up right among us, but they could not hold their ground, and retreated, carrying off those they had been in search of.

What a sad thing it is to see men of such courage, and I may add with so much feeling, listen to a Bernier, who got himself out of the scrape by sending so many credulous beings to be slaughtered, and yet who was not ashamed to beg the rank of cardinal of him who had taken his old master's place! Trust, then, to the religion of such scoundrels in future, and get yourselves killed to further their interests.

The defeat of the Vendeans was complete. We halted all over the plain, and bivouacked on the field of battle, where the Royalists left ten thousand men, twice as many as the Mayence army lost during a five months' siege, and most of them were fathers of families. Bernier ought to have been satisfied, and the other refractory priests also. Their influence over the ignorant was great; that influence I know well exists still, but it will not prevent my saying that the God of good sense, of justice, and of our country gained a victory that day over the god of folly and treachery, for no one can deny that they who fight to keep a rope round their necks are fools, and that they who invite the English and Prussians into France are traitors.

That is clear enough. I have never been able to understand why for the last sixty years so many Frenchmen, sons of the people, have sung the glory of the Vendeans, and represented us soldiers of the Republic as a set of savages, and our officers, who were nearly all young men, as coarse old men with neither sense nor understanding. They must have been either nobles or servants in some noble family, perhaps employed in the kitchens, but all their falsehoods will not prevent the peasants from learning the truth.

I have now given you an account of the battle of Cholet; it was a great victory, but unfortunately it did not put an end to the war. The sans-culotte general, Léchelle, who had not been seen during the battle, took to himself the whole of the glory arising from it; he wrote a long letter to the Convention, in which Léchelle had done everything. Then the army began to despise this cowardly idiot, who had concealed himself during the action, but that did not prevent Léchelle retaining

the chief command, for he called himself "sans-culotte," and that went a great way with many brawlers without brains. We wanted a Léchelle to bring us to suffer defeat. But it will all come in its turn. Now I continue my story.

The Royalist writers have asserted that we burned Cholet. It is quite false. The eve of the battle the first Republican detachments which arrived from Montaigu, Luçon, and Tiffauges, after driving the Vendeans from the town, had planted the tree of liberty in the square, as was always done; they took away the white flag which was in the church surrounded by wax candles, and the more patriotic townspeople had fraternised with them. Later, Stoffiet came back to have his revenge on the patriots, and burned their houses, as the Royalists generally did, and then credited us with their excesses. All that does not affect us now. The Republicans were never as ferocious as these defenders of God. If they shot, if they burned, it was because the others never ceased shooting and burning. It was absolutely necessary to make them understand that these barbarities recoiled upon themselves—without that the civil war would never have ended.

That same night Westermann, supported by the divisions of Generals Beaupuy and Haxo, continued to pursue the defeated Vendeans, and surprised them at Beaupréau. Their chiefs, worn out with fatigue, were asleep; they cut the throats of the outposts, and forced their way into the castle; they carried everything before them. The chiefs made their escape, and the next day, the 18th of October, 1793, we learned that they had found ten pieces of cannon, a powder-mill, thirty barrels of saltpetre, several tons of sulphur, quantities

of boxes of grape, thirty thousand rations of bread, wheat, and flour—in fact, everything necessary to stand a siege—in this nest of bandits. Our affairs, therefore, were going on better and better; but Westermann and his hussars, and all of us, after so many forced marches were quite exhausted.

We halted for one day at Beaupréau, and that gave the Vendeans time to pass the Loire to the number of more than eighty thousand souls—men, women, old people, and children; the whole race crossed in boats or swam across with the cattle, holding on by the tails of the horses and oxen. At first they made themselves masters of Varade, opposite Saint-Florent, a pretty strong position on the other side. The Republican captain in command had been surprised and massacred in the night; the guns thus got possession of served to cover the passage of this multitude of people. If we had arrived twenty-four hours sooner we should have destroyed them all, and this unholy war would have been brought to an end. This shows that we should never rest after winning a battle if we wish to profit by the advantage we have gained; a chance once lost does not offer itself again; from not having followed up their retreat we had still two months of marches and countermarches, fires and massacres, before us.

At Saint-Florent we found more guns, tumbrils, quantities of wheat, flour, and ammunition. But what pleased us more still was to meet on the road a crowd of prisoners who had been set at liberty by the Vendeans—three thousand old comrades of all arms and of every division, who met us in bands. Long before we reached the old market town we saw them running across the fields to us; they were nearly naked, with

old bits of uniform, remains of shirts and cravats, and with hair and beards in a state to make one shudder. These wretches, who for four, five, and six months had been receiving hardly sufficient to keep life in them, were literally nothing but skin and bone. It was very touching to hear some one in this crowd of skeletons cry out, "Michel, Jacques, Nicolas, don't you know me?" One might look at the speaker for some time and not know him, he would be so altered.

So it happened to me. I shuddered when I looked at this troop of poor creatures, for I thought if I had been made prisoner at Coron instead of being killed on the spot, I should have been like one of these. Suddenly I saw a tall man, six feet high, stretch out his arms and call out—

"Michel, Michel!"

And then, after a moment's hesitation, I recognised Marc Divès, as lean as Lazarus; then, notwithstanding he must have been covered with vermin from the state he was in, I embraced him with all my heart; he cried with all his might.

Yes, this hard and tough Marc Divès cried like a child. When we reached Saint-Florent, opposite the old church, I took him to the canteen of the 13th Light Infantry, which had also just arrived. I said to the Parisians, and Lisbeth, and to Marescot, as I went into the tent—

"Look at Marc Divès!"

They all stared, the Parisians left off laughing, and Lisbeth crossed her hands, and said—

"Good Lord! can it be possible?"

All that was left in the copper—remains of vegetables which are always carried about in a campaign—

Marc Divès swallowed them all without waiting for them to be warmed up; everything seemed delicious to him; and when Marescot handed him the can, with what a look of delight he took it! It was one of the most affecting scenes I ever saw in my life. At last, having eaten well and drunk well, among friends who looked on with astonishment, he began—

"Now I feel better; what a beggarly country, what a set of scoundrels! What have they made us suffer since that day at Torfou! Six ounces of bread—yes, six ounces a day for a man of my size. As to blows and kicks, and all sorts of affronts, that was another affair; they never spared them; and if you made the least observation, 'That's not your business;' in a moment you were on your back. So, in spite of my disgust, I said nothing, but put up with it all; I had seen so many shot for losing their temper for an instant. The worst of it was these bandits wanted to make us change our political opinions; their curé, Bernier, used to come and preach to us with baskets of bread and wine. More than one gave way to temptation, and called out 'Vive le roi!' For my part, I would rather have had my throat cut than fight against the Republic; and if it had not been for a deserter from the German Legion who was with them—a traitor who called me a fool, but was not without a heart in his bosom all the same—had it not been for him I should have been shot more than a dozen times."

This was the story of poor Divès; melancholy enough, but yet fortunate to have escaped at last. One gave him tobacco, another lent him his pipe. Knapsacks, old shoes, cartridge-boxes, and uniforms were in abundance for the last three days; carts full followed

us, and the three thousand men we found here were soon fitted out rather better than they had been before. All day long they filed past to the village fountain, where they washed and scrubbed themselves, and cut one another's hair, like so many poodles; they put their queues in order, too. After that they were all armed and equipped.

The Royalists here again have told fine stories about these prisoners, giving themselves the credit of having released them from motives of humanity. In the first place, they could not take them with them to the other side of the Loire, and then I remember Marc Divès told me that more than once they had got ready two guns loaded with grape to fire on them in the church of Saint-Florent, but their chiefs made these savages understand that we had in our power at Nantes many of their relations, friends, and acquaintances, who would certainly be shot in retaliation, and that in the present state of their affairs we should have many more opportunities of returning them more evil than they could possibly do us.

Well, I am glad that among these nobles some were to be found sufficiently prudent to be capable of stopping those who wanted to massacre three thousand poor defenceless devils; all our generals, from the first to the last, would have done the same.

CHAPTER XI.

THE Vendeans posted at Varade opposite us had it in their power to march on Nantes or Angers without hindrance. Léchelle proposed to pursue them by swimming across the river, for we had no boats; he supported this plan against the representatives Carrier, Borbotte, Merlin de Thionville, and all the generals; but when Merlin said to him that he would have to set a good example by swimming across at the head of the first division, it softened him a little, and this terrible fellow allowed himself to be persuaded to form three columns, one of which should go to the assistance of Nantes, another to Angers, and the third should pass the Loire at Saint-Florent, when the two others had turned the Vendeans' position.

I marched with Marceau's column for Angers. About this time we heard of the great victory gained by the army of the North over the Austrians at Wattignies. This was the first time we ever heard the name of Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, formerly a grocer at Limoges, who had joined the 2nd battalion of the Haute-Vienne as a volunteer, and who had now saved France by crushing

the Prince of Cobourg before Maubeuge. This alone was a proof how times had changed, when ci-devant grocers became generals in two years, and beat "the noble race of conquerors."

We also heard that Marie-Antoinette had just been guillotined, and the trial of the Girondins. But these news after the great victory of which every one was speaking produced but little effect; the lists of aristocrats, advertised in the newspapers, made us familiar with such things, and the cruelty of our enemies when in power took away all feeling of pity for their friends.

We passed through Angers without a halt, for the Vendeans had already left Varade and were marching on Laval. The town was in a state of consternation, for the brigands had shed torrents of blood on their road; the tocsin was rung everywhere; reconnoitring parties had been pushed forward as far as the suburbs of the place, and the adjutant-general Savary repulsed with loss from post to post. We knew that the Royalist general Bonchamp had died a short time since, and that a young man, Larochejaquelein, after having made himself master of Château-Gontier, had allowed his drunken soldiers to shoot a patriot alderman and a town magistrate. Imagine the dismay of the quiet inhabitants at such needless barbarities. Those who for the last seventy years have reproached us with our murders by the guillotine must recollect that they never had any mercy on the human race when they were the stronger.

Setting out from thence the Vendeans had driven six thousand men back from before Laval and shot every patriot without mercy; numbers of Breton nobility had joined them. This is the substance of what we heard

as we passed through Angers, and without losing a moment we had to push forward to join the two other columns near Château-Gontier on the Mayenne.

It was dreadful weather, every day marching barefooted with our linen overalls and coats torn and worn out, in the mud and rain, we felt the fine days were gone for good, and winter was beginning. It was hard work tugging at the horses' bridles, and pushing at the wheels in the fog, on an empty stomach, and the wind whistling through the holes in our old uniforms; in spite of oneself the idea often came into our heads we should be better off if we were dead.

The other two columns which arrived the evening before bivouacked round Château-Gontier, a little town then in a state of ruin. For about two hours the advance guard, led by Westermann, had come to blows with the enemy. In the streets you could hear the townspeople asking one another the news in a tone of terror; no one knew anything; the advance guard was six hours in advance, it was about fifteen hundred or two thousand strong. About ten in the evening, just as we were about to encamp, it returned in disorder; cavalry and infantry all mixed together. Westermann, the bravest of cavalry generals, but also the most imprudent, had fallen into an ambuscade about two leagues from Laval; he had lost many men, and had it not been for the night one might have had the Vendeans at his heels.

Thus our operations had a bad beginning on the right bank of the Loire. Then the orders and counter-orders, the coming and going round head-quarters; the officers' disgust as they left the tent where Léchelle was arranging his plans and disputing with the other generals; all

this confusion, which every private soldier noticed, and which they all discussed openly at the bivouac fires, did not tend to increase our confidence; we could not sleep, and when the men cannot sleep, but keep one another restless, it is a very bad sign.

No one, not even the Parisians, had confidence in Léchelle, but he was determined to regain the good opinion of the army. He would take no advice; he was master, and all the representatives, except Merlin de Thionville, took his part. These representatives had instructions not to place any confidence in our generals, and when we think of La Fayette and Dumouriez, and of all those who had done their best to betray their country for the last three years, it is not very surprising.

The army began to move forward as well as it could after having had its soup. I should have liked to have seen my sister before leaving, but she was with Beaupuy's division, which was in front, and when we reached the old bridge of Château-Gontier, it had passed long before.

The Vendeans met us boldly and offered us battle; they were hurrying forward to gain the heights above the large town of Entrames.

Westermann, who had recovered his repulse, and General Danican occupied them first, which the first comer must see was right. Unfortunately Léchelle, who followed them with the Orleans battalions, ordered them to evacuate the heights and to come and form close column. You may believe how reluctantly they obeyed this idiot; but they would have risked their heads by disobeying, so they came down from the heights at once. The Vendeans must have laughed at us, for as soon as they came up we could see them extending themselves along

the rising ground and dragging their guns up after them.

Naturally Kléber's and Beaupuy's divisions, which were in the first line, deployed right and left in order to turn their flank. Then down came the Vendeans en masse on the Orleans battalions, which formed the centre. The battle became general, and as there had been no plan agreed upon every division fought on its own account. But this time the Vendeans had the best of the positions; their grape mowed us down fearfully, without mentioning thousands of skirmishers who surrounded us and never missed their aim.

To add to our misfortunes, the Orleans battalions broke and ran at the second discharge, crying out, "Every man for himself!" Léchelle, instead of rallying them, galloped off past us with his mob of cowards. The Vendeans pursued them at the point of the bayonet till they came to us, when they halted to attack us in column. Then the firing really began. I should be very much embarrassed to tell you in which directions the bullets and grape were showered upon us; in the middle of such an attack one thinks only of loading and firing when we can see the fire of the enemy through the smoke. When a comrade falls another snatches up his rammer and takes his place; it is all very simple.

We remained five hours there—from midday till nightfall. Marceau had been dismounted a long time: his horse had his head carried off by a ball. Our ranks grew thinner every minute. I could still see old Sôme close by me, pale as death; he aimed the gun; I was on the left, a comrade opposite. There was no command given, everything was done of itself.

As night came on half our pieces were dismounted;

ours had lost a wheel and our tumbrils were empty, so we spiked the guns we could not carry off in a hurry, harnessed the horses to the others, and began our retreat.

The divisions commanded by Kléber and Beaupuy, one in our rear and one on our right, still held their ground. The Vendeans followed us up with extraordinary tenacity. We fell back without running away like cowards; we loaded our muskets as we marched, and then turned round and delivered our fire; when we could hear the others coming up to us we closed up and received them with the bayonet.

But now I must tell you something terrible. We had been falling back for about an hour; it was quite dark, and we could only see by the light of the firing, when amidst the din of battle, the rolling of musketry, the firing of cannon, and the noise of the grape smashing everything, and the cries of the wounded, I heard still more lamentable cries. We were approaching a little village where the Beaupuy division still held its ground against thousands of Vendeans. The rascals had turned the position, and these cries came from my sister Lisbeth, who uttered them with a voice which could be heard above the clamour of the retreat, for at that moment the two divisions were joining, thinned by the struggle in which they had been engaged. Lisbeth was calling out—

"Cowards! cowards! Vive la République! Conquer or die!"

As in the retreat I found myself out of the ranks on the right of the battalion, I ran in the direction of the cries; and what do I see? At the corner of an old hut in the village my sister's cart had stopped, and a dozen Vendeans round it, Lisbeth standing on the shafts

defending herself like a fury, and keeping back with her bayonet those who tried to get into the cart, all the time calling them cowards. The hut was on fire. The Mayence men at the bottom of a little street had a bloody shirt at the end of a pole for a flag; it was Beaupuy's shirt which he had given them to rally by. They held their ground; the lane was heaped with dead; Vendeans were coming up in all directions crying, "Vive le roi!" But I saw nothing but my sister, and I rushed up to the cart, driving them all before me. I called out, "Courage, Lisbeth, I am here!"

In less than a moment I had sent four or five of these Vendeans to ground, without receiving a scratch; the others dispersed, thinking I was followed by my comrades. I had to make the most of the opportunity, but Lisbeth only thought of saving her boy; she called out, "Save him, Michel! take him; be off; they are coming back; they will be here directly!"

But I would not listen to her. I seized hold of the bridle and dragged the horse over the heaps of dead and dying through the street on fire. A little further on the Mayence men opened their ranks and let us in, and then Lisbeth, seeing her child safe as well as herself, screamed out, holding both her hands up, "Vive la République! death to tyrants!" She never troubled herself about Marescot, but kept tight hold of her little Cassius.

Some instants later, the battalion having begun again to retreat, Marescot, who had been fighting at the other end of the village, came up. The poor devil thought his wife and child lost; he had received a gunshot wound, and marched along holding on by the side of the cart looking at those he loved best, and then taking me by the hand and thanking me.

No one knew, and no one could say, what would become of us, whether we were going to Château-Gontier or elsewhere. We set off again, abandoning our guns, ammunition, and baggage. The Vendeans, finding they could not carry the village quickly enough, had gone on, while the whole of the rest of their army, about half a league in the rear, fell on Kléber's division, which supported this horrible retreat alone.

I had again taken the horse by the bridle. Our companies were reduced to twenty or thirty men, most of them wounded. It was raining. We marched in close order, getting as far as possible from the village, and from the fire of our rearguard, which played all over the dark plain—we felt confidence in the idea that Kléber was there. In the midst of the battalion rose the bloody shirt of brave General Beaupuy. The remainder of the night passed without any fresh attack. The Vendeans had had enough of it. But I must say we were routed, and for the first time the soldiers of Mayence were put to flight by peasants, owing to the blunders of a miserable general, who himself gave the signal of defeat by running away as fast as he could.

We reached Château-Gontier in the morning at daybreak; there I was really pleased to see our two guns saved from the rout, and old Sôme standing by them and cleaning them with great satisfaction. He thought I was killed, and called out—

"Is that you? The brigands have left your head on your shoulders still!"

Five or six gunners, the last remains of our old Paris and Vosges company, came and looked into the cart at little Cassius, who laughed and played, little thinking of the horrible slaughter from which we had just

escaped. If he has not become deaf he may well be proud of it, for he may say he heard some noise when he was a child. Great princes who have their ideas opened on coming into the world by a salute of a hundred guns, have heard very poor music compared with him.

Marceau had rallied fifteen or eighteen hundred men before Château-Gontier; he had put our two pieces in position on the bridge, and Kléber coming up the last with the wreck of his column, the Vendeans who were in pursuit were stopped. But we soon heard that they had passed the Mayenne above the town, so we were obliged to continue our retreat to Lion-d'Angers.

To give you an idea of our condition, I need only repeat Kléber's words, indignant that Léchelle and his heroes had gone for shelter behind the walls of Angers.

"Imagine," said he, "a crowd of wretches wet to the skin, without tents or straw, with neither shoes nor small-clothes, some without coats shivering with cold, without a single utensil to make their soup. Imagine our colours surrounded by twenty, thirty, or forty men at most, calling out, "The cowards are under shelter, and we perishing in misery here."

It was a sad truth; Léchelle had no right to be general-in-chief; he had only succeeded in being so by fawning on the rabble, and by calling himself a sans-culotte general. I so call that crowd of idlers, drunkards, brawlers, talentless schemers, and informers, all that race of men who live at the expense of others, and whom the people's greatest enemies call Republicans, to make us believe that peasants, workmen, and thrifty labourers are of the same sort. But these people have unfortunately great influence in the clubs in conse-

quence of continually wrangling and informing against others. As long as they confined themselves to this they were thought something terrible, but when they had been once seen, as they were by us on the battle-field, they had as much effect as an old hat or a bundle of straw stuck up in a corn-field to frighten sparrows. The Vendeans would have been well pleased never to have had to fight any others than they.

When we arrived at the little town of Lion-d'Angers, we took up a position on the other side of the river, to right and left of the drawbridge; Marceau manned the redan with sharpshooters, and when the Vendeans presented themselves two volleys of grape kept them at a distance; they were the last fired at this bloody engagement.

The Royalists had taken their revenge for Cholet, which shows the difference there is between being commanded by a general or an ass.

After this victory of Entrames, the Vendeans thought they had won back everything; their general, La Rochejaquelein, was considered by them as the first general in the world; then we saw clearly what they were aiming at, for they immediately went to Normandy to offer their services to Pitt. But Pitt, whom the English thought one of their greatest ministers, would do nothing for nothing; he thought of his country's benefit before everything, he had been pushing English commerce in every sea. When shall we ever have a minister like him? Pitt wanted pledges; he first asked the Vendeans to put some good port in the Channel into his hands; so these good and honest Frenchmen immediately set to work to besiege Granville, in order to give it up to our enemies.

The inhabitants of Granville, all whale and cod fishers from father to son, did not care about being handed over to the English; they defended their town, and they were supported by a good garrison and stanch representatives of the people. The Vendeans called for a Bourbon; they expected his highness the Comte d'Artois, Valentine's man according to God. But the holy man feared something might happen to him; the hundreds of thousands of unhappy wretches who had let themselves be massacred and burnt in honour of divine right could not induce him to expose his sacred person; the Vendeans might well look seaward; nothing appeared, neither white flag nor assistance of any kind—nothing.

They lost many men in trying to get over the walls, and ended by raising the siege.

I did not see these things myself, but I heard all about them, for at that time nothing was talked of in Bretagne but the siege of Granville, and not only patriots, but all loyal Frenchmen, were indignant; one did not know which was most disgraceful, to wish to deliver one's country to foreigners, or to abandon, as these cowardly Bourbons did, those who were sacrificing themselves for divine right.

While this was passing on the coast, the rage of the Mayence division, and in fact of the whole army, burst out more and more against Léchelle. We called for our old general, brave Aubert-Dubayet, or else Kléber, to command us. These outcries displeased the people's representatives; nothing terrified them more than the attachment of an army for its general. They made their report to the Convention, which ordered the Mayence army to be absorbed in the other corps.

Such was the end of this army of true patriots, after having rendered the nation so many services.

Its only reproach could be its too great attachment for those who had always led it through danger courageously and successfully, and its consequent contempt for cowardly and incapable chiefs.

About this time a discovery of fresh treason helped to increase the country's distrust of officers of high rank. A certain Viland, who was commander of the island of Noirmoutier, had surrendered the place and his sword to Charette, the only Vendean chief left on the left bank of the Loire. All these infamous treasons rendered men cruel, they dared to trust no one, and the guillotines were busier than ever.

We set out for Angers, where the army was to be reorganised; divisions, brigades, and battalions were formed, and I was made a corporal in our company of artillery. But after so many privations and sufferings, without clothes, pay, and often without bread, I fell ill, and began spitting blood again, and three or four days after my promotion I woke up one morning in the hospital, where the beds were packed as close as possible from one end of the place to the other. It was again in consequence of the blow I received at Port-Saint-Père. They bled me, as they did before, and I wasted away till I hardly dared look at my arms and legs. I said to myself—

"Poor Michel! poor Michel! If ever you see home again you must burn a taper and put up an 'ex voto' in the chapel of La Bonne-Fontaine, as they did in old times."

My new battalion had left for Rennes. It was November, the period of cold rains in these moorland

towns, over which the sea fog brought by the wind swept continually. So, in spite of the crowded state of the hospitals, and the weariness of seeing the litters continually coming and going, of hearing the wanderings of those near me who were about to give up the ghost, and of thinking, "It will soon be my turn," in spite of all that, when I saw the heavy rain beating against the windows, and thought of my comrades in the field with nothing dry on them but the inside of their knapsacks, then I felt more patient. And then I consoled myself by the reflection that forty or fifty thousand Vendeans, men, women, and children, repulsed from before Granville, were also obliged to go wandering about looking for food or devouring the rotten apples which lay on the roads. It was poor consolation, doubtless, but when people only think of injuring you, you cannot be disposed to wish them anything better.

Many of our men who came from Granville with General Danican told us these wretches were dying of dysentery, and that you could follow their traces by the dead they left along the roads; they told us, too, that their principal leaders having got hold of a vessel were about making their escape to England, but that Stofflet when he heard of it went and stopped them, and threatened to use other means if they again attempted to desert those they had led into trouble. This was quite true, as we heard afterwards; a simple gamekeeper from our neighbourhood, for Stofflet was a native of Lunéville in Lorraine, had been obliged to teach these princes de Talmont and these d'Autichamps, the descendants of the noble race of conquerors, their duty. Had it not been for Stofflet they would have

disappeared; however, sooner or later that must happen.

The two armies of the West and the coast of Brest were united at Rennes under the orders of Rossignol; the departments of the Sarthe, the Manche, Calvados, and Maine sent us thousands of patriots to watch the rebels, and every one thought it could not last much longer when we heard of the great rout at Antrain.

The Vendeans, driven from before Granville, were retreating on Dol, hoping thereby to reach and cross the Loire; Rossignol, about as good a general as Léchelle, tried to bar their passage, but in the frightful situation these people found themselves of either passing or being all destroyed, their desperation was so great that they completely routed Rossignol, and drove him back upon Rennes.

Then there was a report that the brigands were descending the Mayenne by forced marches; that their advanced guard had already passed Fougères, that by the evening they would certainly be at Laval, and that we should see them next morning before Angers.

Imagine our astonishment. Brave General Beaupuy, still weak and ill from his wounds, had the générale beaten; this town of Angers is a town indeed for bells and bell-ringing. And it could be heard more than a league distant. The tocsin was rung along both sides of the Loire. We invalids, only half cured, we left the hospitals and asked for muskets and cartridges; the people's representatives, Turreau, Bourbotte, and Francastel, took the necessary measures for public safety; for, once masters of Angers, the brigands would have had a free passage by the bridges of Cé;

they could either invade us or retreat at will into the Bocage.

What a change, and always in consequence of that same distrust of generals of any experience in war, and the presumptuous confidence of ignorant men, who fancy they know everything without having learned anything. How many times have we been on the verge of ruin, and what sacrifices have we not made to save the revolution!

It was the 5th of December, snow was falling, and the people from the faubourgs were making their escape into the town; lines of their carts laden with furniture encumbered the streets, for they knew the Vendeans had the habit of burning and destroying everything; the rappel was beaten at the Government Place, where the National Guard was assembling in numbers. We had been posted on the old ramparts, from the Saint-Aubin gate to the Haute-Chaine; we dug embrasures for the guns as fast as we could in the turf, and flanked them with fascines and bags of earth.

Now was the time to see the terror these Chouans inspired; every townsman came and helped us; women, old men and young without distinction, all pushed at the wheels of the waggons, the tumbrils, and the cannon, carrying shells by two and two, making a line to pass on the cannon-balls; every one did his best, while the housekeepers brought us soup to keep us warm, for it was dreadfully cold, the plains were covered with snow, and the river was filled with floating ice.

About ten we could see nothing near us, and if estafettes had not come in every instant to warn the place that the enemy was approaching and that the Rennes army was coming to our assistance, we never

should have thought we were in any danger. But about midday the brigands showed themselves near D'Avrillé in front of a small wood; they swarmed along a stream which runs just there into the Maine, and they soon invaded the faubourg; the artillery on both sides began firing from one till midnight. The National Guards made a sortie, but were driven back; Beaupuy led them; he was wounded again. The Vendeans then occupied the chief street of the faubourg, but you may believe we had not forgotten the lesson we had learned at Mayence, and the enemy's batteries were soon silenced by our own.

I have told you about so many sieges and sorties that this undertaking of the Vendeans, without resources or discipline, nor regular commanders, could not appear of any importance in comparison. Our shells set fire to three hovels on the right of the Saint-Aubin gate, and the Royalists, having advanced as far as the bridge, were swept back on all sides and forced into the faubourg. One municipal officer was killed, that is all I remember, for after this night, when an assault was expected, the next day they tried to construct one or two batteries, which were dismounted, and the same evening their whole army retreated. We knew nothing of it; we stood to our guns with lighted matches, when the next morning the challenge of the outposts, the shouts of "Vive la République!" and the "Marseillaise" air informed us that our people were arrived, and as we heard neither guns nor musketry, we soon learned the Royalists had taken another direction.

Westermann's Hussars, the 2nd battalion of the Somme, and other troops, after having been recognised by the outposts, entered the town, and we all fraternised.

The Vendeans, hearing of the approach of a strong advanced guard at Châteaubriant, and fearing being taken between two fires, raised the siege in a hurry. Some hussars were sent forward to reconnoitre, and about eleven the news came that the brigands were marching, either to Flèche or Saumur, and leaving numbers of wounded, old men, and women behind them; throwing away their arms and leaning on sticks, trying to pass themselves off as mere beggars, and so get back to the Bocage. It was wretchedness added to wretchedness—the beginning of the end.

This alarm had quite set me up again, the more so that, in consequence of orders from the representative Francastel, all the defenders of the ramparts had received, the evening before, new shoes and a long capote of grey flannel with large sleeves which went below our knees. Never had we been so warm, and the newcomers looked at us with envy.

But what did me more good and gave me more pleasure still was a letter from Margaret. As I was going to the hospital to fetch my necessaries—for Marceau's column was to follow the advance guard—and take my proper place in the battery, the porter who was doing duty as baggage-master, with his box and his kit in his hand, was just calling out in the great hall, "Such a one, Such a one." Three-fourths never answered their names; but at the name of "Michel Bastien," I called out, "Here."

"Good; sign your name or make a cross. Here you are."

God of Heaven! after thinking oneself forgotten by father, mother, brothers and sisters, and even by Margaret, for the last three months, to see that one still

thought about you. My eyes were full of tears, and I ran about without knowing where I was going, looking for some place where I could be alone. At last I sat down in a corner of Maître Adam's old wineshop, where I had often gone with Father Sôn e, near the window opposite the cathedral, and I began to look at the seals one after the other, saying to myself, "That comes from Phalsbourg, Margaret wrote it;" and then I turned the letter, black with stamps, over and over; at last I opened it.

I could repeat it to you word for word; but if I told you how tenderly and lovingly Margaret wrote, more than one of you would laugh at me for a fool, and think I want to repeat the compliments I received nearly eighty years ago. Margaret herself would laugh at me. So we will leave these youthful vanities alone. But here are things which must interest every one, and which I ought not to forget: Margaret told me in this letter, dated November, 1793, how all our country was on the march; that Maître Jean, Létumier, Cochard, Raphaël Mangue—in fact, all the patriots in the town of Bois-de-Chêne and the mountain—had just set out, under the command of Elof Collin, with their knapsacks on their backs and their muskets on their shoulders; that now only women, old men, and children were to be found in our villages; and that this great rising had been the consequence of an action at Pirmasens, where we had lost many men, and been forced to evacuate our camp at Hornbach, and even the lines at Wissembourg.

She told me that the army of the Rhine had fallen back to Saverne and the army of the Moselle to Sarreguemines, on the road from Metz to Phalsbourg, so that at home now we were one great camp, and if a great battle was fought we should hear the guns in our

cottages; all who were left at home were busy making lint, preparing bandages, and getting at least one bed in each house ready for the wounded; that ambulance corps had been organised at Metting, Quatre-Vents, and Saint-Jean-des-Choux; and all horses and carts had been pressed into the service for the conveyance of provisions and the wounded in case of necessity. She also told me the old generals had been set aside and that two others had come, children of the people, Charles Pichegru and Lazarus Hoche; that they had shown themselves in the town amidst general enthusiasm; that the honours of the Club de l'Egalité had been offered them; they had visited the barracks and the ramparts, and then that one had gone to take up his command in Alsace, and the other in Lorraine. What interested me also very much in this letter was to learn that Chauvel had gone some time before, with Saint-Just and Lebas, to arrest the civil and military authorities of Strasbourg, who were about to surrender the place to the Germans. It seems the Republic did not not suit these federalist aristocrats; they preferred being princes' servants and great lords' lackeys to being free men; in their houses white cockades had been found, and in the sentry-boxes on the ramparts little flags with crowns and the fleur-de-lys. Posts were left unguarded, the wounded were rotting in the hospitals; in fact, treason became every day more apparent. While their trial was pending, the Mayor Dietrich and the municipal officers had been sent, some to Paris, the others to Metz, Châlons, and Besançon. Such was Margaret's news, adding the country was still swarming with monks, capucins, and refractory priests, who had returned to France with the Prussians and Austrians. But they would all be taken in the same

haul of the net, and the reign of virtue would not long delay.

Notwithstanding my joy at having good news of Margaret and of my father, who was still in good health, and of my little brother Stephen, whose only grief was that he could not enlist as a drummer boy, you may think it sufficiently disquieting to know there were a hundred thousand Austrians and Prussians within ten leagues of your home, and to reflect that Phalsbourg would certainly be bombarded, my father's cottage burnt, Maître Jean's fields laid waste, and all those I loved reduced to want; one can understand that did not increase my satisfaction; and I would much rather have fought down there in defence of my own house than exterminate wretched peasants in La Vendée, whose only reproach was their ignorance, and that was not their fault.

This idea made my heart ache; but what enraged me still more was to hear that our idiot Valentine, who had enlisted as a shoeing smith in a Condé regiment, had had the insolence to write to Maître Jean to look out, for the rope was ready and the slip-knot made to hang him up somewhere. Till then I had always considered Valentine an object of pity, and that he was not responsible for his natural stupidity; but I saw now he had become mischievous, and I was sorry for it. What was to be said in such a case? Maître Jean's rage knew no bounds; all he wanted was to meet his former apprentice face to face.

Margaret's letter at first gave me great pleasure, and then it excited my indignation more than ever against traitors; I saw our enemies relied greatly on these wretches, and that they must every one be exterminated.

Rossignol arrived the same day, in the afternoon;

he was formerly a clockmaker, and became colonel of gendarmerie after the taking of the Bastile—a thin man, with a large nose and small blinking eyes; he wore his large tricolour scarf and his hat without the usual general's stripes. Westermann was already in pursuit of the Vendeans with his hussars; Rossignol gave orders to support his pursuit in the direction of Beaugé.

Fifteen to eighteen hundred patriots, horse and foot, left by the Saint-Aubin gate. It was dreadful weather, and we heard next day that our national guards had arrived too late; the Royalists, held in check for five hours in front of La Flèche by the 4th Battalion of the Sarthe and two pieces in battery on the bridge, had passed the river higher up, and were masters of the place; but we heard at the same time they had left it, and were marching on Mans, and Westermann was close in their rear. This numerous army of peasants' children, old men, priests, chanoinesses, &c., could not long remain in the same place; it ate and drank all there was in a few hours; the lofts were soon empty and the cellars dry, and then they had to go and forage elsewhere.

Rossignol returned to Châteaubriant immediately, and thence to Rennes. A strong detachment then left Angers to rejoin Marceau's division on the road to Mans. I was with it—still very weak, but well satisfied to find myself in active service again, for there is nothing more wearisome than being shut up in a hospital or even in barracks. It rained and snowed. The same evening we found the division encamped round a town called La Fontaine-Saint-Martin. The staff was in the village; the nomination of Marceau to the commander-

ship-in-chief, par interim, was talked of; he had left the camp two or three hours before on a reconnoitring expedition.

All night we heard the rolling of artillery on our right; other divisions had just effected their junction in the environs of Mans; that of Muller arrived from Tours, Tilly's from Cherbourg, and Westermann's detachment, which had followed the Vendeans step by step, from La Flèche. The Mayence soldiers, now reduced to a handful of men, arrived from Châteaubriant in our rear, under Kléber's orders. Rain, wind, and snow troubled us greatly, but we all saw a great affair was coming off, and said to ourselves—"Patience for a little while, and all our troubles will be over." Marc Divès and Sôme would have been glad to have had my warm new cloak on their backs, but it was of such service to me I would not have lent it for all the gold in the country.

At last the challenges of the sentries and the passage of cavalry informed us that Marceau was returned. We made our soup; after the soup we struck our tents and marched upon Mans.

That night two or three skirmishes occurred between Westermann and the Vendeans, in which the latter had the best of it.

I could never understand how generals who are always on the road, always on horseback, always employed reading despatches, examining spies, prisoners, deserters, village mayors, postmasters, having letters opened, galloping in front to see everything, taking up positions and then consulting among themselves at councils of war or otherwise—after all these fatigues, and many others of which I am doubtless ignorant,

how can they have the strength to pass night after night without sleep, and be always ready the next day to begin again? Yes, it astonishes me how they can do it, and yet such were all the real generals I ever knew—Aubert-Dubayet, Kléber, Marceau, and Beaupuy; it is really astonishing.

We had still to march five or six leagues before we reached Mans. At Foulletourte we found the Muller division and the people's representatives, Bourbotte and Prieur; they were talking of a defeat of Westermann before Pontlieue; the representatives seemed very angry. We halted, and in the house of the mayor the generals held a council of war, and then we continued our march. Westermann had sabred hundreds of Royalists in this direction; we fell in with them everywhere—lying along the ditches and on the village dunghills; some of our own men, too, lying with their faces downwards. It did not rain then, but was very damp and cold; the roads were bad, especially so for the train.

We reached Pontlieue about six in the evening, and directly afterwards Westermann, who was waiting for us with his hussars and four or five hundred infantry, after having seen Marceau for ten minutes, began his attack on the bridge, for the town is built on the other side of a little river which flows into the Sarthe. Farther on, at the end of a long street full of manufactories, is Mans, on the side of a steep hill.

The Vendeans had barricaded themselves in Pontlieue; they had even constructed redoubts, but it was so foggy that we could see nothing of them.

Every one thought we were going to bivouac till Kléber's division came up. The representatives of the

people had even dismounted, and all the battalions had halted and were looking for space to encamp on the right and left of the road, when two cannon-shots, followed by a terrible discharge of musketry, and cries of "Forward! forward! Vive la République!" gave us notice that Westermann, who gave himself and his men no rest, had already begun, and instead of encamping we should have to support him in his attack and fight all night. It could not be otherwise. As soon as the affair was well begun, we heard "Forward!" cried continually; and so we had to set off again in the dark, whipping our horses, shouting, and pushing at the wheels to get them over the pavement, swearing and grumbling.

The Vendeans had heaped up earth on the old bridge and erected palisades on both sides, and while we were removing these obstacles the balls whistled about our ears; we could hear the cannon roar much farther off, in the direction of the town. Westermann and the grenadiers of the ci-devant Armagnac regiment, not satisfied with passing the bridge and the suburb, had already got into Mans, where of course the Vendeans, who expected something of the sort, received them with volleys of grape.

The bridge once cleared we all moved forward—cannon, tumbrils, cavalry, and infantry; the Cherbourg division, which came up to us at the double, seemed still more eager and more enthusiastic than ourselves; they were not quite so familiar with the gaps which cannon-balls can make in a battalion; but they were about to learn it.

Everything crossed.

Had the enemy been strong enough to repulse us

we should have been in an ugly position, the Huisne in our rear, the Sarthe on our left swollen by the recent rains, and the Royalists in front. But we never thought about it.

There were more than fifty thousand Royalists in Mans; thirty thousand fighting men, and the remainder women, ladies of rank, wounded, and priests.

Many years have passed since this battle, and often in the night, while thinking over these distant events, I fancy I can hear the clamour in the town, those endless shouts, the cannon-shots which followed one another, and made the tumble-down old streets shake, darting their red lightning above the gables and dark old towers. I can see the reflection of the discharges in the river, and hundreds of windows, high and low, lighted up by the flashes of musketry; the Round-hats inside the houses passing muskets from hand to hand; down below, along the steep principal street, our grenadiers running, and the enemy's grape driving them back again; Westermann galloping forward, followed by files and files of the 6th Hussars, with their pointed shakos and sabretaches and dolmans flying in the air behind them. All this in the darkness of night, lighted up only by the frequent discharges of musketry and cannon.

When we reached the corner of this street one would have said that fire was being vomited from every garret window as from the mouth of a furnace; the firing was incessant, and already the wounded were creeping close to the walls, and drawing their legs up close not to be crushed.

We, with our guns, horses, and fourgons at a gallop, were a terror to these poor creatures, for at times like

these one must pass at any price. Under those heavy wheels men were crushed like worms. "Forward! forward!" You heard no other order but this from the officers. Your next man falls, you do not look round. About the middle of this street, in front of a barricade of carts and carriages fastened together, and manned on both sides by Vendean sharpshooters, we were halted and unlimbered our guns. A battalion of grenadiers of the Aube supported us; but everything was showered upon our heads—tiles, chimney-pots, and bullets. When one thinks over such terrible moments, and says to oneself, "I escaped all that," then one is forced to acknowledge, "It is God who preserved me, and God only."

Our first discharges swept away the carriages like straw; they flew into thousands of pieces, and the grenadiers at the same time broke in the doors with axes to dislodge the Royalists. Then the butchery began inside the houses, and shouts of "Vive la République!" "Vive le roi!" were heard from the windows on all the floors; the slayers and the slain could be heard rolling about the floors, while our guns alone thundered above all the rest of the tumult, and for a second silenced the cries, groans, and yells of the struggle.

The main street was not the most difficult one to pass. All the lanes which opened into it were so narrow and so steep that many have steps to them, and it was from thence, and from those old hovels, with small balconies like baskets before them, that the bullets rained upon us. Those who had the order to dislodge the enemy from these holes and corners had to face quite as great dangers, for furniture, stones, flower-

pots, presses, &c., were hurled upon them and crushed them to death. The rage of the soldiers then became so great that in an hour from that time quarter was given to no one, and men, women, children, and old people were all killed without mercy.

The Royalists in the Place behind their guns stood as firm as posts; they returned every shot we fired in every direction. Twice we received orders to advance and get closer to the Place. We had lost many of our own men, and the grenadiers of the Aube replaced them, and helped us to serve our guns.

Westermann himself came to us the second time, and cried, "Forward! Mille tonnerres!" He was as pale as death, having been wounded twice and lost much blood; but his eyes were bright. He seemed to feel nothing, but while he was calling out to us he fainted.

We laid him down behind a heap of paving-stones. We all thought he was dead; but a minute after he got up, took hold of his horse's mane, and mounted and galloped off to the Place. We also were marching in that direction.

This frightful butchery, attacks and repulses, lasted six hours without respite. Our object was to inclose the Vendeans in the Place, and to hold them there till Kléber's arrival. Marceau held all the streets around, but there was a fight at every house. Our tumbrils were three times supplied afresh.

About midnight an order arrived to cease firing; the principal positions were taken; the Royalists held this Place only, where there were some ancient markets surrounded by pillars.

It was in this old edifice that the women, the priests, the marchionesses, and countesses had taken refuge

among their horses, and all that was left after their last defeat.

We had about two hours' rest; then every one was anxious to begin again. Notwithstanding our fatigue we had no desire to sleep, but as we had not had time to make our soup we were hungry, and we ate what we could, for our rations had been served out to us seven hours before at Foulletourte, and one was glad to find one's loaf of bread strapped to the knapsack. Lower down the street several of our comrades had found on the dead Vendeans gourds full of brandy, and onions and salt in their havresacks.

We were all in expectation, watching the movements of the enemy. Heavy clouds covered the sky, but from time to time the moon shone out, and let us see the dark masses of human beings heaped up and hanging out of the broken windows all round. Not a single musket was fired.

Above the challenges and the passage of our patrols a great clamour could be heard from time to time from the higher part of the town; it seemed like great gusts of wind, but the next day we knew it was the retreat of all who could escape by the Laval road.

As we were not masters of the Sarthe, Marceau had not been able to occupy that road.

Between three and four we heard that Kléber had arrived. We expected him to begin the attack; but it only took place at daybreak. We first cleared all the streets in our rear for the passage of the cavalry. I think the others had had enough, and that from midnight, when both sides had stopped fighting from fatigue, a great number, leaving the priests and women behind, had taken the road to Laval without giving their chiefs

notice. Such is my opinion, because when the day began to light up the roofs of the houses about five, and the word of command, "Forward!" was given, the desperate resistance we all expected did not last a quarter of an hour. Westermann, at the head of the free chasseurs of Cassel, charged down the street from one end to the other. Some shots were fired from the windows and some volleys of grape carried whole files away, but we were on the Place in less than ten minutes. We had orders to follow the column at a gallop, and to take up our position in front of the markets. But the markets were abandoned; nothing remained there but dismounted guns, empty waggons, wounded horses, and defenceless wretches who were straightway put to the sword. The whole Place was strewed with dead, and Westermann without halting set off with the 6th Hussars on the Laval road in pursuit of the fugitives.

If I were to tell you that we did not massacre all that were left concealed in the houses, and that we let them escape to shoot us afterwards, and that many of those female furies who carried bags to hold their plunder, and who did not hesitate to despatch the wounded, were spared—if I told you so I should tell you a lie! We who were obliged to keep guard over our guns, and to remain in position in case of attack, had nothing to do with it; but our comrades from Cherbourg and elsewhere, after seeing their brothers cut to pieces and shot by hundreds, revenged them now; cries were heard on all sides, horrible cries and screams! What would you have? War is war; blood, tears, fire and pillage. May misfortune attend those who begin it, who above all, war against their own country; may all these horrors fal

on their own heads! They are answerable for it to the whole human race, and to the Supreme Being as well.

The generals ordered the rappel to be beaten. Kléber and Marceau, the representatives Prieur, Turreau, and Bourbotte, all did their best to put a stop to the slaughter; they talked of law and justice to calm the rage of the soldiers. Listen! We had lost more than a hundred thousand men in La Vendée, we had endured all sorts of privations during a whole year, while Prussians, Austrians, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, English, and Dutch, all Europe, in fact, were attacking our country, we were forced to make war without quarter on people who ought to have supported us against the foreigner, and who were attacking France in the rear!

Let people think of these things, and let those who reproach the Republicans with cruelty be silent; at the bottom of their hearts they are obliged to confess that right was on our side, and that we have well fulfilled our duty to our country and to ourselves.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER this conclusive defeat of the Vendeans the army rested two days at Mans; but Westermann, one of the greatest cavalry generals we ever had, never left the enemy, who might have rallied before Laval; notwithstanding December's cold, and in spite of his wounds, he followed them through every village; his hussars massacred them in prodigious numbers. At Laval the wives of the patriots rose against the fugitives and stopped them; the blood of their husbands and children spilt by the Royalists after the affair of Entrames called for vengeance; the Breton peasants did the same. These poor people had seen the horrors of civil war, the insolence of the Vendeans, their drunkenness, and their other vices, and they received them with pitchforks and scythes.

"Go and get hanged elsewhere, brigand! Go and shoot Christians in the back while you are telling your beads—go, wretch!"

Marchionesses and countesses, leaders dressed as women, and disguised priests, begged their lives in vain—they were all sent to their last march. The hussars were upon them with their bloody sabres.

"Here they are! Here they are!"

Let that serve as an example to all creatures so abandoned by Heaven as to rise against their own country! Let them learn that criminal prosperity endures but for a short time, and that adversity soon overwhelms them.

When we arrived in the environs of Ancenis five days later, where the remnant of these wretches sought a passage across the Loire, and had collected planks, staves, barrels, and even beams and flooring from houses they had pulled down on purpose to make rafts, we found Westermann's hussars on the heights of Cornouaille, on the other side of Candé. They all had rings, earrings, bracelets, embroidered banners, and gold crosses, some on their fingers, others on the hilt of their sabres, or in their pockets; their small pouches were full, and the rascals used nothing but handkerchiefs trimmed with lace. From that you may imagine what had become of the marchionesses and duchesses; it makes one shudder to think of it.

The representatives, Bourbotte and Turreau, redeemed many of these valuable objects, and sent them to the Convention; the greater part of the cavalry sent them to the Republic as a present, for it was very poor and needed money, attacked as it was by despots on every side.

But now you will see what we must think of those famous chiefs of the Royalists Henri de La Rochejaquelein the Sapinauds, De la Ville-Beaugé, De Langerie, and the other defenders of the throne and the altar. Certainly the great mass of Vendean peasantry, and especially the Chouans who came and joined them at Laval, were guilty towards France; they were so also towards

their wives and children, for risking their lives in fighting against France, that is evident. They were acting neither as honest men nor as good Frenchmen; but the ignorance and stupidity in which they had been brought up from father to son for ages past was the cause of it; these poor creatures knew not what they were about, and deserved to be pardoned. But the others, those who had drawn them across the Loire, deserved no pity; these nobles and priests who for the sake of their own privileges had blinded so many thousands of men to the consequences, who had preached to them the extermination of their brothers, and had promised them eternal life as a recompense for their crimes, these men were the real criminals; it was on them that the responsibility of this rebellion lay, they were the men who ought to have devoted themselves to the last man to obtain mercy for old men, women, and children; it was these men who, knowing that they had no other resource, that the Loire had overflowed in consequence of the snow and rain, and that there were no means of constructing a bridge to save them all—these nobles ought to have devoted themselves, and presented themselves before the representatives of the people, and said to them—

"We are so and so. We are of the noble race of conquerors, and we would not submit to your Republic; we have led this crowd of wretches against you; we have led them astray. Now you are the stronger. Be generous, then, and spare them; they are men of the people, like yourselves. Take our heads as a ransom for them! Let France enjoy her new laws, and let her retain a certain respect for men of feeling who have fought for the privileges of their race against you all,

and who have died proudly and courageously in saving the remains of their army!"

Would you not have acted thus? I appeal to you as the first comer, to you, soldier, workman, peasant, to all of you who do not belong to the noble race, but who only ask for equality before the law. Would not this idea have occurred to you? Yes, I am sure it would; death is but a little thing when one does one's duty; one need not be born noble to despise it. Here I am, a very, very old man, and I raise my hand before the Eternal Judge and say I would not have waited one minute—the sacrifice of myself would have been made already.

Well, now listen! We were going from Cornouaille to Maumusson, a large market town, near which there are some glass-works, like those of Meisenthal; our advanced guard had exchanged shots with the enemy in front of Ancenis; at that moment a boat was crossing the Loire; in this boat—the only one the Vendeans had been able to find far and near, for at their approach all boats had been sent to the left bank in order to prevent their getting back into their Bocage—in this boat the general-in-chief, Henri de La Rochejaquelein, Stofflet, Sapinaud, La Ville-Beaugé, Vaugiraud, De Langerie, and some other leaders crossed over, with the pretext of bringing back two large barges loaded with hay which were moored on the other side, and so save the rest of their people. This is what the Royalists tell us in their books, that generals went themselves in search of boats instead of sending an officer they could trust, and a few soldiers! Such a story as that excites one's pity, the more so that the moment they reached the other side these brave fellows took shelter in a small wood

close by, and disappeared without once looking round, and the poor creatures they thus abandoned to their fate never heard anything more of them.

From our position on the banks of a stream between two hills we could not see this sad spectacle, and I am glad of it; I should have been disgusted at it for the remainder of my days. However, this is a true account! The wretched Vendeans, men, women, children, and old men collected together on the bank of the Loire, now saw their fate before them; a gunboat which had come from Nantes opened fire on their rafts, and they went to the bottom; they could see their Bocage on the other shore, without a hope of reaching it; they fell into one another's arms groaning and crying—

"It is all over—we are lost."

We had no need of hurrying ourselves; as the divisions came up they quietly took up their position round the Place. There was another fight to take place in the streets. The 17th of December Westermann put two guns in position on a hill and fired a few random shots. Then all the bells began to ring; the tocsin never ceased—at midnight it was ringing still. A band of Vendeans tried to escape in the direction of Varades; this was what Westermann expected; he followed them with his hussars, cut them to pieces, and returned to Ancenis at daybreak, just as the last Royalist column issued from Ancenis on our right; it consisted of about fifteen thousand men, women, and children. We did not move in order to let them file out, but as soon as they were clear of the town the hussars entered it and sabred about a hundred stragglers; they took some cattle, baggage, and six sixteen-pounder guns before the mairie; the poor wretches left

everything behind them now—without leaders and resources, they lost their courage too.

Our division was sent in pursuit. Westermann hung on their rear; he destroyed many at Touches, Nort, and Blain. They halted the 20th of December at Blain. Marceau hoped at last to have it in his power to destroy them all at one blow; we hurried our march through wind and snow; but when we reached Blain, where Westermann was waiting for us, the Royalists had already taken the road to Savenay; cutting the bridge over a considerable river, whose name I have forgotten, in their rear. We made haste to repair it.

It was at Blain that the Prince de Talmont made his escape with Donissant, Desessart, Pérault, Piron, Rostang, and a hundred and fifty officers and great ladies who were not able to save themselves in La Rochejaquelein's boat. Talmont was arrested a few days afterwards at Laval and guillotined before his own château. The peasants preferred dying with arms in their hands.

When the bridge was repaired we continued the pursuit. For eleven days we marched barefooted on the ice, with our linen clothes in rags; such was our ardour to overtake and exterminate the enemy.

Kléber joined us with some fresh troops eight or nine leagues above Nantes. We could see the brigands still retreating, but we were approaching the marshes, and they could not go much farther. The 22nd of December, about five in the evening, we reached Savenay nearly at the same time they did, a small town full of old houses built of mud, in which there was a market for these districts, of cattle, game, and poultry; it is built on some high ground where there was nothing but broom and fern

white with frost. The Vendeans had taken up their position in a little wood in front of this place; our general ordered us to dislodge them immediately.

Our guns were put in position to the right of the road which leads to Nantes, and the Vendeans, after a vigorous resistance, returned into the town.

The whole night was spent in skirmishing, for the enemy held a strong position in the lanes and among the gardens. It was a dry cold which chilled you through and through. I had wrapped my feet up in straw, as many of my comrades had done. The bivouac fires shone as bright as the stars, we were roasting on one side and freezing on the other; no one could sleep.

About midnight Kléber and all his young staff officers passed near us; he wore a large green cloak lined with fox-skin; he called out to us—

"How many cartridges?"

"Eighteen for each piece," replied the lieutenant; "the boxes are full, general, but that is all."

"We must be sparing of them," said Kléber, "we must take to the bayonet and butts of the muskets to finish with!"

And then looking at us without dismounting, with his clear blue eyes, he recognised some of the Mayence men, no doubt, for he said—

"Well, this is about the same sort of weather we had last winter in Mayence."

"Yes, general," replied old Sôme; "it was not warm when we were working at the fortifications of Cassel, and wheeling barrows along the bridge over the Rhine."

Then Kléber took off one of his great leather gloves,

which reached his elbows, and held out his hand to Sôme, saying—

"Comrades, the rights of man will have the upper hand soon—we shall have deserved them well."

He seemed quite pleased, and we all shouted out together, "Vive la République!"

He then set off again and went from position to position, as he always did the eve of a battle.

We made our soup before daybreak, and as soon as the pale December's sun rose over the Loire the action was begun by the skirmishers in front. That lasted about twenty minutes, when Westermann, at the head of his hussars and a squadron of chasseurs, charged the brigands who fell back on the retrenchments they had raised during the night. These retrenchments were mounted with guns; it was necessary to carry them. We moved along the Nantes road to try and enfilade them while they were attacked in front. We were supported by a battalion of grenadiers. But the enemy saw what was our object in an instant, and turned all their fire upon us.

Then lower down the road we were obliged to take up a position to reply to their fire; these desperate men charged us in spite of the grape we poured into them, and the sustained fire of the battalion of grenadiers who covered our right. The bayonet attack was dreadful. Westermann galloped up to take the Royalists in flank, but even that would not have checked them, for they fought with inconceivable tenacity, and they might have reached the guns if Marceau had not formed two battalions in column and marched straight upon their retrenchments. Then those who were attacking us flew to their defence, and

these retrenchments were attacked from morning till midday; one column repulsed, another was brought up, and so on.

We kept on advancing; we mowed them down; but their fury was so great that instead of returning our fire, as is usual with artillery, they preferred receiving our fire and returning it into the attacking columns. However, at last one of these columns got into their retrenchments, followed by Westermann's cavalry, and we came up and enfiladed them. Then the massacre began in the retrenchments, in the gardens, the town the fields, the houses, the church, in fact everywhere.

We lost there again some hundreds of men, so musket-shots, bayonet-thrusts, and sabre-cuts did their usual work. "No quarter!" was the word on both sides. All over the snow-covered plain we could see patches of red and heaps of dead, but no wounded. In the distance hussars and chasseurs flew like the wind in pursuit of the last of these wretches, who made for the marshes as far as one could see. I have said that two or three thousand escaped across these marshes, and it is possible, for we were tired of killing, and the cavalry could not act in the deep ground. Some of these poor creatures may perhaps have saved themselves; they were the last remnant of that immense horde of a hundred thousand Vendeans who passed the Loire two months before. Those men may well say to their children and grandchildren, "We have seen war on a grand scale. We have seen father and mother, brothers and sisters, wives, children, and friends perish from hunger, cold, fatigue, and all sorts of misery on the high roads; we have seen them slaughtered without pity, because they had no pity on

the Republicans, who had none on them; we have seen every possible horror. But what has given us more pain than all, what has broken our hearts and reduced us to shame and despair, is the desertion in the moment of danger of the nobles who caused us to rise in insurrection against France, and later on the baseness of a Bernier bowing and stooping before the ci-devant Jacobin Bonaparte, in order to obtain a bishop's mitre."

This was the end of the great war in La Vendée.

Two days afterwards we entered Nantes. The news of our victory at Savenay arrived at the same time as that of the taking of Toulon, which the English had evacuated, and carried off all our ships after setting the place on fire.

I need not describe the enthusiasm of the patriots and all the authorities when they saw us enter, with Kléber, Marceau, and Westermann at our head, with our naked feet, linen pantaloons, hats worn out in wind and rain, long beards, scars, and innumerable wounds; the rolling of the drums, the cries of "Vive la République!" the tricoloured flag at every window, the women and young girls who leaned over, and welcomed us from the balconies, the crowd which followed us, and then the guns and standards taken from the Royalists; the discourse of President Gracchus and of Scévola Biron at the Port Maillard Club; the invitations of the townspeople, who carried us off into their houses, patriotic banquets, &c., &c. No, one fête is like another—when you have seen one you have seen all; only the patriots of Nantes, after having risked being invaded, massacred, and burnt out twenty times in the course of a year, were in some sort more delighted at our victory than we were ourselves; and the military commission and the

revolutionary committee, where Goulin, Pinard, Grandmaison, and Carrier presided in turn, did not allow the enthusiasm of the moderate party to cool. We were then equipped and clothed again from head to foot, and quartered in town on the citizens.

I lodged in a small street which led to the "Prairies de Mauves," with a tinman, who sang "Ca ira!" from morning till night! He was an old man with large spectacles and a very good workman, but he sang from fright; and his daughter, a tall, dark, pale girl, was always at her prayers. The old man belonged to the Jacobin Club, and trembled like a hare at the least noise out of doors. The company of Marat was making domiciliary visits, suspected persons used to arrive from Savenay, Montaigu, and Tiffauges in a string half a league long; and we heard at the same time that Charette had begun the war again in the marshes, and had recommenced ambuscades in the direction of Machecoul, but that could only be a trifle after what we had seen: the root of Royalist resistance was destroyed. They would have done much better to have remained quiet, for we had no longer anything to fear from them.

About this time the army was dispersed according to the requirements of the Republic. The battalion of the Saône and Loire, with the first and second of the Allobroges legion, were detached against Charette; the 32nd demi-brigade, ci-devant De Bassigny regiment, the 57th Beauvoisis, and the 72nd Vexin regiments left for the army of the Oriental Pyrenees. We had made the campaign with the 72nd since Mayence, and we fraternised with tears in our eyes before parting—the 13th remained in garrison at Nantes. I was very well

satisfied to return to my old battalion, Paris and Vosges, as sergeant.

There were not many old comrades left of the section of Lombards and Gravilliers; but those who remained were always as good-humoured as ever, and were the favourites of Lisbeth, who called them "my Parisians." I saw her every day with Marescot and little Cassius. Marescot had been proposed by his company for the rank of lieutenant; his courage and his good behaviour at Entrames gave him a claim to it. He had no idea of taking it, as his business was much more profitable, but Lisbeth would not let him be quiet for a moment; she was determined to be an officer's wife, and at last I said to my brother-in-law—

"Look here, do as your wife wishes. I know her—she will make your life a hard one; she is a vain woman, like all the girls of Baraques des Bois-de-Chênes."

He laughed, and as his commission had come, he was all the same very well satisfied to be promoted.

Every day afterwards Lisbeth used to ask me if I had written home to say she was an officer's wife. This made her uneasy; she cared no more about her business, for during this year, by means of sundry glasses of brandy, she had got possession of all the battalion's plunder—rings, earrings, bracelets, gold-embroidered standards—she had some of all sorts in her baggage, and one day when she was showing me these things she said in a very sharp way for a girl brought up to run after carriages on the high road and beg—

"Look here, Michel, if there are ever duchesses again, I might be a duchess too. I should deserve it better than the former ones, for I have made war

myself and gained all I have for myself. The others had everything found for them as soon as they came into the world, but I have got on through my own courage and my own good luck. Cassius shall have everything. Now we have once got promoted we shall get on."

Women's vanity is a terrible thing. Lisbeth would have thought it very natural that the Republic should expend six hundred thousand men that she might be a duchess. If I had not known how ignorant and stupid she was, I should have shuddered with indignation; but it was useless to be angry with such narrow-minded people. All you can do is to shrug your shoulders as you listen to them.

Another thing made my heart ache. This was to see the condemned pass every morning and evening from the Tour du Bouffay to the Prairies de Mauves. It snowed incessantly, and their lines of carts, in which the poor half-naked creatures were shivering, their hands tied behind their backs, made me feel cold. As the snow was deep you could hear no noise in the street, except, from time to time, a horse's neigh, or the jingle of a sword belonging to one of the escort. Everything passed in silence like so many shadows. Ah, I have seen all sorts pass in this manner—men and women, old and young, nobles and priests! and it always put me in mind of the carts we escorted from the Porte Saint-Nicolas to the prisons at Nancy, when General Bouillé shot, hanged, and broke on the wheel so many defenceless wretches who were justified in asking for their pay. Carrier carried out the orders of the Convention, and M. de Bouillé those of his court. For the last seventy-five years the Royalists have cursed Carrier's

memory; they ought not, however, to cry out so loudly when they themselves set the example in cruelty.

Military commissions which judge numbers at once are as good for Republicans as Royalists, only the Republicans in '93 made use of them for the first time, and the others, who for hundreds of years had always employed them against the people, then found out it was wrong. It must be said that the conduct of M. de Bouillé, who violated the law, as the punishment of breaking on the wheel had been abolished, was approved of by Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette, and he possessed their entire confidence, while Carrier, who invented the "noyades," lost his head on the scaffold for having exceeded his instructions; and then we must also recollect that if by dint of treason we had been conquered, the gallows, which were then called "Justices" under the ancien régime, would have been loaded with patriots from one end of the kingdom to the other; Brunswick had promised us they should!

The end of it all is that all men are equal, and we must always expect that others should do to us what we have done to them.

In the midst of this dreadful spectacle I did not forget home, and as I had written and told Margaret about our victory at Savenay, and asked for news which never came, my anxiety increased every day. I fancied Alsace and Lorraine invaded by the Prussians, and said to myself—

Phalsbourg is besieged for certain, else Margaret would have answered my letter. I could see Valentine's threats carried into execution; the Baraques on fire, Maître Jean, Létumier, my father, and all our friends obliged to hide themselves in the woods. I was quite

in despair, notwithstanding the Convention's last bulletin announcing that Hoche and Pichegru had begun again to act on the offensive, when I received this letter from Chauvel, who told me many pleasant things, and soothed me again. I have just read it over again; it recalls a glorious period, and makes a good conclusion of the third part of my history.

"*To Michel Bastien, sergeant in the Artillery Company of the 1st battalion, Paris and Vosges, of the 31st Light Demi-Brigade.*

"*Landau, 6th day of the 3rd decade of the 4th month, the year II. of the French Republic, one and indivisible.*

"My Dear Michel,—

"We have passed through a rude campaign; the year I. of the Republic will be one of mark in the history of nations.

"I have read with pleasure all your letters to Margaret, and the idea occurred to me a hundred times to answer you, but we have had so many enemies to contend against, we have been threatened with so many dangers both from within and without, that I have always feared either to show too much confidence in the future or to discourage you. To-day the Republic's affairs seem to take a turn for the better; our enemies are driven back. They will return to the charge; never mind! we have at least breathing time, and leisure to prepare for their reception.

"You know I look on you as my son, and, happen what may, I desire that your children, who will be mine also, shall learn what their grandfather did in these difficult times; the finest inheritance we can leave

our children is the example of our patriotism and our courage. They will have none other from me, and I hope that will be sufficient.

"Margaret told you in her last letter how Saint-Just, Lebas, Renki, Berger, and myself passed through Phalsbourg in Vendémiaire. We arrived from Metz, where we had been inspecting the arsenals, and we were going to Strasbourg. It was a critical moment, and our perils were of long date. After the taking of Mayence and Valenciennes, the revolt of Lyons, the treason at Toulon, our reverses in La Vendée, Pitt's manœuvres to get all trade into his hands, the increasing depreciation in the value of assignats, the famine in the provinces for want of arms to cultivate the soil, after all that the Convention had been obliged to take stringent measures, for all of which I voted, because they were just, and rendered necessary by the state of affairs. It had renewed the Committee of Public Safety, which had become too lax for the present state of things; it had sent Marie-Antoinette and the Girondins before the revolutionary tribunal; it had decreed the suspension of our constitution until the peace; the permanent requisition of all citizens from 18 to 45 years of age for the army, and that of all horses whatever for the cavalry; the payment of contributions in kind for the support of the troops; the establishment of a revolutionary committee in every commune to render an account to the Committee of General Inspection of reactionary intrigues; it had settled the prices for goods of the greatest necessity, for days of labour and manufacture, the obligatory circulation of assignats, the sending of representatives of the people into the departments to hurry the raising

of men and collecting arms, and their mission to the armies to watch over the generals and give an example of devotion to their country—well, all that was not sufficient.

"There is no doubt much good had already been the result. The Republic had been saved, the victories of Wattignies and Cholet, and the retaking of Lyons, showed we were moving in the right direction. All our losses had occurred from the treachery or incapacity of the generals of the Monarchy, whom we were wrong to have kept in command; all the rebellions in the interior were brought on by the resistance of ci-devant deputies to the constituent and legislative assemblies, who had been chosen by the ignorant people from among their enemies, —thanks to the manœuvres of the Girondin Minister Roland!—and of old functionaries who were dependent on large pensions from the privy purse and the red-book. It was then necessary to replace these generals by younger men sprung from the people, and to reduce to powerlessness those Royalists who were in the disguise of federalist Republicans. That was what we were going to do in Alsace, for on this side danger was indeed pressing.

"Directly after your departure from Mayence for La Vendée our small armies of the Rhine and the Moselle had a hundred thousand Austrians and Prussians on their hands; they had been forced to give way; that of the Rhine on the lines of Wissembourg, that of the Moselle on the Sarre. The enemy was between the two—it was in his power to invade Lorraine. An effort was made to effect a junction; unfortunately the opposing forces were too great. The enemy beat us at Pirmasens, he obliged us to evacuate the camp at Hornbach,

and made himself master of the lines of Wissembourg. When we arrived, in Vendémiaire, the army of the Rhine had retreated as far as Saverne, that of the Moselle to Sarreguemines; the Prussians were in Lorraine, the Austrians in Alsace; Haguenau had opened its gates to them, Fort-Vauban was taken, Landau blockaded for the last three months. The whole country was overrun with capucins, refractory priests and émigrés who preached up civil war openly, in the hope of making another La Vendée of our country; the authorities in Strasbourg were in a conspiracy with the enemy to surrender the place.

"You see, Michel, our position was not very brilliant.

"The Committee of Public Safety had just named Hoche general-in-chief of the Army of the Moselle, and Pichegru of the army of the Rhine. We knew nothing as yet of what these generals were capable. Prussian detachments were advancing as far as the heights above Dôsenheim and Saint-Jean-des-Choux; La Petite-Pierre and Bitche were invested, and our troops discouraged. We must put an end to all that.

"Saint-Just, Lebas, and myself saw immediately we should be obliged to take strong measures. My two companions are Robespierre's best friends, young, well-educated men, very calm and cool, who see clearly into things, and are not afraid of using strong remedies. I am tender in comparison; I often think men are more to be pitied than blamed.

"Coming down from Saverne, we were shocked to find the defenders of their country allowed to lie in a state of the greatest misery and neglect. The Donon and the Schnéeberg were already covered with snow, and in the lowlands a damp wind was blowing, while

there before our eyes were our battalions encamped in the mud, without tents, shoes, or cloaks. We had an interview with Pichegru—a sort of clever peasant in a general-in-chief's uniform; he gave us all sorts of information respecting his army. We set out thence with an escort, for the enemy's reconnoitring parties had pushed on to Marmoutier, Wasselonne, and farther still; and everywhere we saw the same evidences of privation and misery — cavalry horses under sheds without straw, hay, or covering; soldiers wandering about the fields digging for roots, others exploring deserted villages at the risk of being surprised.

"We were the more astonished at all this, as the representatives, Milhaud and Guyardin, who had been sent here before us, had organised the revolutionary legion in Alsace, as it exists in every other threatened district, to secure the subsistence of the troops; and this legion ought to be followed by a movable tribunal, whose duty it was to decide in cases of difficulty which occurred between citizens and requisitionaries. These people performed their duty exceedingly ill, and since our arrival at Strasbourg, the magnificent reception given us by the popular societies, and the assurance of the authorities that all was going on well, could not prevent our seeing the misery of the lower classes, the soldiers without clothes, discipline, or leader, the insolent luxury of the aristocrats, posts left unguarded, gates unclosed till after midnight, &c.; nor discovering the connivance existing between the civil and military authorities and the enemy.

"The nephew of the Austrian general Wurmser was arrested in the town and sent to Paris as a spy.

The colonel, a captain, and an adjutant of the 12th cavalry regiment, in whose possession some white cockades had been discovered, were immediately shot at the head of their regiment. After verifying accounts, inspecting the different services, and particularly the hospitals, where the wounded were rotting by hundreds; after having satisfied ourselves the requisitions of grain and wood for fuel had never been delivered, and that candles had been allowed to be charged for at the rate of seven francs the pound, and that it was impossible to obtain the least proof of any act of superintendence or patriotic energy on the part of the authorities, we imposed a contribution of nine millions on the moneyed inhabitants of Strasbourg, for, according to a decree of the Convention, the rich are charged with the support of the garrisons which defend them.

"'When the nation sheds its blood in torrents for the country, the rich can very well give their gold!'

"So said Danton, and I think as he did.

"These people cried out lustily, but as the guillotine was then a permanent institution, they paid the money on the day fixed, up to the last centime.

"We applied five hundred thousand livres to the relief of the poor old people who were dying of hunger because their sons were serving in the army, and the rest was devoted to the execution of the requisitions which were in arrear.

"But this was not sufficient.

"We ordered the municipality of Strasbourg to have two thousand beds ready in twenty-four hours for sick and wounded soldiers, who were to be properly attended to in every respect; horses were to be provided for the surgeons to ride when making their visits; ten thou-

sand pairs of shoes and two thousand cloaks were to be sent immediately to Saverne to protect the defenders of the country in a proper manner against the cold weather; also, because these just, necessary, and patriotic measures seemed to be obnoxious to the authorities instead of exciting their emulation, we ordered that these same authorities should be broken and sent to Metz, Châlons, and Besançon—that others should fill their places by election.

"The Austrians must then have seen that their plan was a failure—that Alsace would not yet be theirs, in spite of ci-devant Marie-Antoinette's promises, who had offered them this bit of France as an inducement to the Emperor to invade us. But it was just in time; in a few days we should have heard the yellow flag had replaced the peasant's cap on the cathedral flagstaff.

"It then remained to settle the business of the movable tribunal, which had by no means fulfilled its duty, and which had even, under the direction of a ci-devant grand vicar named Schneider, allowed itself to take cognisance of cases to which it was quite incompetent, and to levy exorbitant fines, impose contributions, and even to pass sentence of death.

"Schneider happened to be just returning from a circuit in the environs of Bar; he drove in triumphantly with six horses to his carriage. This is the resolution we came to with regard to him; it will give you pleasure to read it, and will show you that your very just remonstrance in the case of the old grandmother Becker has had its effect. Schneider had committed many other crimes; at last he received his reward, to the satisfaction of all good patriots in Alsace.

"'The representatives of the people, sent as envoys

extraordinary to the armies of the Rhine and the Moselle, being informed that Schneider, accuser of the Revolutionary Tribunal, formerly a priest and a born subject of the Empire, has presented himself this day in Strasbourg, making a most insolent display, with six horses to his carriage, and surrounded by guards with drawn swords, have decreed that the said Schneider shall be exposed to-morrow, from ten in the morning to two in the afternoon, on the scaffold of the guillotine, in the sight of all people, to expiate the insult he has offered to the morals of the infant Republic, and shall then be forwarded from brigade to brigade to the Committee of Public Safety of the National Convention. The governor of the place is charged with the execution of the present decree, and will render an account of it to-morrow at three in the afternoon, &c.'

"This is the way to act with such scoundrels; all our success dates from this. If we had hesitated we should soon have been bought, sold, and delivered; for these kings, nobles, monks, and all these despots of high and low degree agree together, like thieves at a fair, to rob the nation. Our manner of deciding such questions seems to vex them greatly; so much the better—it proves it is a good one.

"After having put these little difficulties in order, it was time to look to more serious matters.

"Since our defeat at Pirmasens and the occupation of the lines at Wissembourg, the Prussians had fortified themselves on the Sarre, and the Austrians at Niederbronn, Frœschwiller, and Reischoffen, in the German Vosges. Hoche, the new general of the army of the Moselle, chosen by Carnot, had begun by restoring discipline among his troops, and then he had sent one of

his divisions from Sarreguemines to dislodge the Prussians from Bliescastel, and had put them to flight. In consequence of this affair we had occupied the heights of Deux-Ponts and Mimbach.

"On his side, Pichegru, general of the army of the Rhine, had attacked the Austrians at Bergheim; but the enemy, vigorously supported by the Prince de Condé, had repulsed us. Austrians and emigrants were still in Alsace, at Haguenau, the greatest nest of reaction in all France.

"Hoche, now master at Deux-Ponts, had made a second attempt to get nearer to Landau by way of the heights of Kaiserslautern, but this time he had failed for want of ensemble in his movements; the Prussians stood their ground, for they are good soldiers. Then this young man showed he was really a man of genius, for instead of obstinately trying to force them, after the affair of Frœschwiller, in which we had the best of it, he left a division in observation before them; crossed the Vosges, then covered with snow, with the rest of his army, and effected his junction with Pichegru, to act in concert with him, take the Austrians in the rear on the Moder, clear the lines of Wissembourg, and raise the blockade of Landau.

"It was a great undertaking.

"Lacoste and Baudot had arrived with newer powers. Pichegru did not seem satisfied to divide the command—he wished to act alone. Lorraine was only covered by one single division: fortunately the Prussians were not aware of it. It was necessary to act promptly. Lacoste and Baudot took the responsibility on themselves and gave the chief command to Hoche.

"The enthusiasm was great. The tocsin was rung all

through the country; battalions of National Guards arrived from the farthest part of Lorraine. People were getting tired of the foreigner.

"It was then that having found myself in the camp, my greatest pleasure was to find Maître Jean, Létumier, Collin, and fifty more good patriots at the head of the National Guards from Bois-de-Chêne, Phalsbourg, Metting, Lixheim, Sarrebourg, Lorquin, and all our neighbourhood. I made them a speech, which was not necessary; the terrible cry of "Landau or death!" extended all along our line for more than six leagues.

"We were advancing by columns across Alsace; the Austrians fell back and took up their position in front of the Lauter. Hoche, his staff, and all of us on horseback, followed this great manœuvre; we felt convinced beforehand that victory would be ours. Hoche looks less like a countryman than Pichegru, but is more frank and sincere. He is a fine young man of five-and-twenty, with bright eyes and an expressive face. But I must reproach him with one fault: sometimes he promises his soldiers money for the guns and colours they take from the enemy! It is putting very little trust in their love for their country, and it is wrong at that age to know the weakness of the human heart. I like your Kléber better at Torfou, when he said to Captain Chouardin—"You will stay and be killed here with your men, and you will save the army;" and the other's reply, 'Yes, general.' Well, up to the present moment Hoche has justified the confidence reposed in him by the Republic. I believe he is an excellent Republican, and a man of feeling and devotedness to the cause.

"Thursday the 6th Nivôse, early in the morning, we

found ourselves in presence of the enemy. He was intrenched on a height in front of the old château of Geisberg; in his rear and on his flanks were the lowlands and little slopes of Wissembourg. The height was defended by rows of palisades, of abattis, and ditches, and flanked by formidable redoubts.

"Hoche kept thirty-five thousand men in the centre for the principal attack; three divisions deployed to the right, two divisions to the left. As we were awaiting the order to march, couriers arrived bringing us the news of the taking of Toulon. The news flew through the army instantly, and the cries of 'Forward!' could be heard at a distance like the rolling of thunder. We moved forward and the battle began.

"You know, Michel, the sound of the cannon, the rolling of musketry, the drums beating the charge, the braying of trumpets, and the thousand shouts of a desperate battle; but I believe nothing like this was ever heard before. Loud shouts of 'Landau or death!' rose above the din and the whistling noise of the shells before they burst. In a few minutes we could neither see nor hear anything. My companions and myself galloped behind our brave soldiers, whom, occasionally, a break in the smoke allowed us to see for a moment, and then hid again from our view.

"All of a sudden I found myself rolling on the ground, with my cheek and shoulder in the deep mud; my horse had been killed by a cannon-ball; and I must confess when I came to myself I was not sorry for it, for I had great trouble in keeping my seat, having always been more at my ease on foot. I got up again rather bewildered; the others had gone on without even seeing what had happened to me. So I drew my

sword and ran and joined a battalion which was climbing the height. Every second I felt the wind of a ball, and the higher we got the louder the noise became.

"We were marching up to a battery. It was only about twenty paces from a great earthen square that I heard the command, 'With the bayonet!' and I saw that we were there. Our first two companies were already in the redoubt; the others followed, scrambling over fascines and sand-bags. I followed, and from the battery I had the spectacle of the rout of the Austrians; they were everywhere beaten, and tried to take up a position in the rear, but they were pursued at the point of the bayonet. I ran forward also, quite beside myself with indignation, to sweep away this crowd of slaves. Their long white lines, spread over the rising ground, broke from time to time like spaces of walls falling down, and the heads of our columns with colours flying could be seen passing through them.

"But eight Austrian battalions, which were, I believe, Hungarians, a strong Prussian reserve, commanded by Brunswick and Condé's cavalry, held their ground a long time, and defended themselves desperately. It was only towards evening we saw them all in retreat, the Austrians on Frankenthal, and the Prussians on Bergzabern. At Wissembourg all their baggage fell into our hands. The joy of these brave Alsatians at their deliverance made us shed tears; we embraced one another like brothers, and the next day, the 7th Nivôse, having marched early, we entered Landau, of which the blockade had been raised the evening before. Then the enthusiasm began again. Provisions arrived from all parts of the country. Hoche had seen to everything beforehand. After famine came plenty. What a great

day, Michel, and what moving sights one sees on such occasions! Friends and relations meeting one another again, unfortunates we had believed lost, starved, reduced to the last extremity, come to life again, and then the humanity of the soldiers after they had done their duty. One could talk of it as long as one lives.

"I write you this letter from Landau, from the grand hôtel of the Pomme-d'Or, Rue de la Poste, which you ought to know, as you were blockaded in Landau for six weeks.

"Maître Jean, Collin, Létumier, and some other patriots from home have promised to come and dine with me, and I am waiting for them.

"Yesterday we were in snow and mud up to our waists; to-day there is a good fire in my room, and we shall sing the 'Marseillaise' together, and drink a few glasses to the health of our Republic.

"It is in very good health is our Republic, and it promises to be long-lived. All the noble race now begins to understand that the reign of liberty, equality, and good sense is about to replace the reign of the Charles, Louis, and Christophers, who never had any sense at all. People are growing wiser; they want accounts; we must come to an understanding with them, and transact our business together.

"At the beginning of this year the soil of the Republic was overrun with enemies; we have cleared them off, and we have remained masters of our own homes, but not without trouble. When I told you in '92 in our club at Phalsbourg that the war of one people alone against the envy, selfishness, and ignorance of all the rest would be a terrible one, I was quite right. Never mind! we have come out of it victorious, and this cam-

paign against Europe, in which we have fought more than a hundred actions and more than twenty pitched battles, has not prevented us from laying solid foundations for the future.

"You have not had time, in the midst of this struggle, to read what has been going on in the Convention, but you must know it has done its duty, that it has never lost sight of its mission to found the happiness of the people in time of peace on good institutions. I will not touch upon our grand military reform to establish discipline in the camps and inspire young recruits with confidence, by the suppression of old and useless manœuvres, by attacking in masses, and so giving our movements more uniformity, and the constant renewal of our resources during invasion or civil war. This immense work will be the glory of Dubois-Crancé, Carnot, Prieur (of the Côte-d'Or), and some other members of our military committee.

"But what was particularly our work was the establishment in France of uniform weights and measures in order to put an end to the frauds which for ages had existed between province and province, and which was a great prejudice to trade. Also for having decreed the codification of civil laws, and voted the first articles in this code relative to the political status of individuals. For having established all the long lines of telegraph; for facilitating the public service; for having created a property in literary and artistic productions; for hitherto authors and artists might die of hunger, or live on the wages of some great seigneur, for skilful robbers took possession of their labours, and made a profit by them. We therefore decreed that composers of music, painters, and authors should enjoy

the exclusive right of selling their productions as far as the Republic extended, and make what use they thought fit of their property; and their heirs or representatives should enjoy the same rights for ten years after their death.

"And also for having decreed:—The new Republican constitution, which was indispensable to the greatness and power of the nation; the creation of the great book of the public debt; the sale on credit and in small lots of the estates of emigrés; the division of communal property; the indemnity to be paid to communes which had suffered from the invasion of the enemy; outdoor relief in a proportionate amount to families burdened with very young children; and the liability of communes to support poor old persons incapable of obtaining employment in proportion to their strength. One of our finest institutions, and certainly one of the most difficult, is the creation of a new measure of time. The old calendar had its origin among a barbarous and credulous people; for eighteen centuries it had indicated the advance of fanaticism, the degradation of nations, the scandalous triumph of pride, vice, and folly, the persecutions and affronts of virtue, talents, and philosophy, under the rule of cruel and stupid despots.

"Ought the honoured crimes of kings, the knaveries of bishops, and the progress of humanity, the proclamation of the rights of man and his freedom from ignorance and servitude to be engraved on the same tables? We would not have it so; time was about to open a new page in history's book, and we therefore decreed that the French era should date from the 22nd of September, 1792, the day when the sun reaches the true autumnal equinox, and enters the sign of the

Balance at nineteen minutes past nine in the morning, according to the Paris Observatory; we have decreed a thorough reform in the calendar based on these precise terms, and by-and-by, Michel, you will see this admirable work, which places our Republic in advance of all monarchies, which are pledged in favour of ancient errors, so favourable to their rule.

"We only acknowledge justice and reason: in that lies our strength, as indestructible as Nature herself.

"But I still place our decree respecting public instruction above everything else, for it is not enough to possess good seed, it must be sown. It is plain enough why despots put so many obstacles in the way of free speaking, thinking, and writing—nothing is easier to understand; why they should hinder or prevent the progress of information; if truth once shines forth they are lost! The Republic, on the contrary, has no better ally: it is by the aid of instruction that she will overcome all her difficulties; and whatever may be the resistance of her enemies, their lies, their knavish tricks, and their evasions, the dyke is broken down; it is only a question of time, and light will be afforded even to the blind.

"We have therefore decreed the obligation imposed on fathers, mothers, and guardians to send their children to the primary schools. This decree is dated the 29th of last Frimaire. This was only the beginning of a number of other measures which we are about to bring forward, and which are already framed, for having good masters in the sciences, arts, agriculture, commerce, navigation, and even in war. A free people ought to know how to defend itself; we shall have military engineers, and engineers for mines, bridges,

and roads, geographers, and naval engineers. All that the great king and all the kings in the world have not been able to effect for the last fifteen hundred years, we shall carry out in eight or ten years at most.

"After that let a servile crowd cry out and abuse us, let it prefer its ancient rulers to us; let it call us, as it now does, 'drinkers of blood,' because we shrink from nothing to save the country and the rights of man, by destroying the aristocracy, misery, and ignorance; let it say what it will, Michel, even in case of misfortune, and if we must perish, what do the members of the Convention from the first to the last care for that? Posterity will do them justice.

"May God only grant that we may remain an united people, as we have been since the fall of those wretched Girondins, who weakened and compromised everything! If they had remained in power, the Republic would have been no longer in existence; kings in coalition against the rights of man would have made a Saint-Bartholomew's day of the patriots; the ancient régime would have been again established in all its power, with its nobility, clergy, and its abominable privileges; the poor would labour again, as they did before '89, for the support of two or three hundred thousand individuals in pride and idleness; and the Austrian, the Prussian, the Englishman, the Spaniard, and the Portuguese would each have taken a part of France to pay the expenses of the war. Our union has been our strength; it has given us victory, and we shall still want all our strength to finish what we have undertaken.

"Two men have raised themselves in the Convention above the rest by their talents and their services: Robespierre can organise everything, he has that talent;

he attributes everything to the State; he wishes everything to depend on the State. Danton desires that everything should be free; he would throw everything open; the State should make as few regulations as possible; everything, according to him, ought to be according to the people's choice—judges, representatives, administrators, functionaries, &c. These are very different ideas, and very difficult to conciliate. We shall see what the future will decide, and my greatest wish is that for the safety of the country these two men should come to an understanding together, and that they should put the interest of the Republic before every other consideration. But here are my friends, Maître Jean, Létumier, and all the rest—I can hear them laughing on the staircase.

"My dear Michel, I embrace you. Maître Jean and the others desire me to do the same for them. They desire me to tell you that the fête would be more complete if you were present, which is very true, my good Michel, and we should all be glad to press you to our hearts.

"Your father,

"CHAUVEL."

At the end of this good letter Maître Jean had put in his large handwriting—

"Health and fraternity, my old friend Michel. Ah, how glad I should be to see you and Margaret at table with us! That will come in time. We will work together at the forge again some day. That scoundrel Valentine wanted to hang me; he was with Condé's men—we beat them in grand style; they ran like hares, We embrace you a thousand times. Vive la République!"

And below more than twenty patriots had signed their names.

And now my volume is finished. Spring is returning, and I am not sorry for it. All this winter I have tired my eyes in reading old documents over again; now we will put our spectacles in their case again for a time, and then we will finish this long history. Farewell, my friends; let us keep our health, that is the principal thing.

MICHEL BASTIEN.

At the Valtin Farm,
February 28, 1869.

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